

# THE AMERICAN IMAGO

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*A Psychoanalytic Journal  
for the Arts and Sciences*

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Founded By: Dr. Hugo Sachs, Boston  
Publisher and Managing Editor: George B. Wilbur, M.D.

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## FAUST AND MOSES (1)

Adolf F. Leschnitzer

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In his extensive treatise "Faust und Moses" (1a) Konrad Burdach shows that the figure of Moses strongly influenced Goethe's creation of Faust. Time and again from 1772 to the end of Goethe's life, i.e., for a period of six decades, one can trace a recurrence of Moses' figure in Goethe's mind. Ample evidence of this can be found in his letters, poems, in his other creative works and, also, in his scientific studies. Such preoccupation with Moses, together with an ever-changing conception of the Biblical figure, is demonstrable in *Faust*, not only in some casual details but also in the most significant parts of the work, viz., the great monologues which serve as pillars of the majestic literary construction that Goethe worked upon throughout his life. Thus, Burdach shows that the conceptions, memories and ideas directly traceable in such surprising detail to Goethe's preoccupation with Moses are components, or, rather, integral parts of the towering figure of Faust.

The Moses referred to here is scarcely the one of the Old Testament; he is rather the representation in rabbinical, Islamic, Christian lore, the Moses of theological and mystical meditation. It is the picture of Moses as portrayed for many centuries in the traditions of the Arabic and occidental civilizations whose imprint — influence would be somewhat of an understatement — Goethe's *Faust* bears.

At various points in his investigations, Burdach raises such questions as: Why did Goethe devote his attention so frequently and in such detail to the Moses figure? Where does this intense life-long interest come from? And time and again Burdach discovers further illustrative passages. Burdach's questions become especially pointed when he analyzes Goethe's first reference to Moses in a letter to Herder, dated July 7, 1772 in which Goethe writes:

. . . Courage and hope and fear change in my breast

... poor man whose head is everything ... I am now in Pindar ... You'll know now how I feel and what your letter has come to mean to me in this "Philoctetic" state. ... To grasp, to seize is the essence of all mastery. ... It must go on or break ... I should like to pray as Moses in the Koran: 'Lord, make space in my narrow breast.' (2)

Burdach comments on this letter:

... At this moment, when he (Goethe) has been occupied with Goetz, "Ossian", and the folk songs, and while he is groping his way between Shakespeare and Pindar, pondering over a new science of emotions based on a theory of recognition and a theory of art, we do not expect him to recall the old Jewish hero, or even to identify himself with him. What traits in Moses' character and fate offered the psychological point of contact? (German text p. 629 in *op. cit.*)

Concluding his treatise Burdach says:

... But certain ideas ... which he had absorbed in his early youth, ... accompany him all his life and persist while he is working on *Faust*. They remain in the substratum (Untergrund) of his consciousness for some periods of time; they occasionally reach the surface until they are finally shaped into being by his mature creativeness, lifted into the bright light of humanity, glittering in an aura of eternal beauty. (German text p. 789 in *op. cit.*)

These are the closing words of the renowned Prussian academician's extensive study. With the tremendous and indomitable courage of an explorer Burdach has lead us to the limits of what philology and history of literature could achieve at his time. Is it possible for us to go beyond these limits?

A brief methodological consideration seems appropriate here. We must examine Burdach's concept: "Certain ideas ... remain in the 'substratum' (Untergrund) of his (Goethe's) consciousness." What is "the substratum of his consciousness?" Burdach's phrase would appear to have a metaphysical irrational significance and to suggest that "Here we have reached the last secrets which do not lend themselves to further revelation and disclosure." This "substratum

of consciousness" is reminiscent of the "primal experience" (Urerlebnis) of Friedrich Gundolf, another great literary historian of the past epoch, a scholar who had not reached Burdach's stature in the field of analytic, critical research but who was his equal as a synthesist and historian and his superior as a writer (2a). The sociologist Karl Mannheim once said the irrational certainly has its place in life and in thought but that it should not be resorted to prematurely.

This by no means suggests that such eminent scholars as Konrad Burdach and Friedrich Gundolf acted hastily. Burdach at his time, and with the means at his disposal, achieved the utmost possible. But the questions arise whether we now cannot accomplish more than he did, whether we do not possess ways and means which were not available to him or which he might have disdained to employ.

Consciousness is a psychological concept. Perhaps modern psychological insight offers a perception which can lead us farther than the limits reached by Burdach's investigation. The following analysis is an attempt to supplement his work.

## II

There can be no doubt whatever that Goethe as a youngster knew the Moses story. However, to understand the importance it had for him, we must be prepared to follow comprehensively the development of Goethe as a child.

In 1917 there appeared an article by Sigmund Freud entitled "A Childhood Recollection from 'Truth and Fiction'." (3) This study deals with a well-known incident which is obviously the earliest experience in Goethe's life which he himself could "recall originally." "Recall originally," according to Goethe's interpretation, would, in this context, mean a recollection not based on later anecdotes told by the parental family and other adults and then adopted as one's own recall. It is an incident that took place in the poet's early years, probably when he was four. He describes how, to the delight of his parents' friends who lived opposite the Goethe home, he threw out of the window all the crockery on which he could put his hands. Freud's interpretation of

this incident is now generally accepted by child psychologists on the basis of similar incidents observed in other children. Freud assumes that such throwing out of dishes is a symbolic or magic action expressing the child's stirred-up emotions. It is probable that Goethe as a child — as many other children — was emotionally upset over the birth of a sibling. Goethe had not only a sister, Cornelia, but four more siblings. Of the six children four died as infants.

We can assume that it was the birth of Jacob in 1753 which affected Goethe at this time. Jacob died in 1759, when he was six and Goethe ten. It is an interesting fact that in "Truth and Fiction" Goethe only once, and then casually and not in a too friendly manner, mentioned his little brother. The poet merely says: "He was a delicate child, quiet and self-willed, and we never had much to do with each other. Besides, he hardly survived the years of infancy." (4)

Freud, then, adopting E. Hitschmann's views, quotes from notes the latter had placed at his disposal:

Goethe, too, as a little boy, saw a younger brother die without regret. At least, according to Bettina Brentano's narrative, his mother gave the following account: 'It struck her as very extraordinary that he shed no tears at the death of his younger brother Jacob, who was his playfellow; he seemed instead to feel annoyance at the grief of his parents and sisters; he rebelled /in Freud: stood out/ against it and when his mother asked him later if he had not been fond of his brother, he ran into his room, brought /in Freud: out/ from under the bed a heap of papers on which lessons and little stories were written, saying that he had done all this to teach his brother.' The elder brother would, therefore, have been glad enough all the same to play the father to the younger and show him his superiority. (5)

Freud continues:

If we return to Goethe's childhood-memory and put in the place it occupies in "Truth and Fiction" what we believe we have obtained through observation of other children, a flawless connection appears which we should not otherwise have discovered. It would

run thus: 'I was a child of fortune (5a): destiny had preserved me for life, although I came into the world dead. Even more, destiny removed my brother, so that I did not have to share my mother's love with him.' And then the train of thoughts goes on to someone else who died in those early days, the grandmother who lived like a quiet friendly spirit in another part of the house.

I have, however, already declared elsewhere that he who had been the undisputed darling of his mother retains throughout life that victorious feeling, that confidence in ultimate success which not seldom brings actual success with it. And a saying such as 'My strength has its roots in my relation to my mother' might well have been put at the head of Goethe's autobiography. (6)

Thus, according to Freud, the incident refers to a rather definite development in Goethe's youth which became a determining factor in his whole life, i.e., the blissful and gratifying relationship with his mother. Goethe did indeed become one of the characteristic representatives of that type of person whose life, so to speak, bears the imprint of a harmonious and happy relationship with the mother.

In line with Freud's conception, I have conjectured that Goethe's attitude as a child may furnish us with an explanation of Goethe's life-long interest in the Moses figure. I have sought to establish this relationship and should now like to submit the results of my investigation.

In *Poetry and Truth* Goethe made various statements which have so far escaped the attention of scholars and which may prove to be vital for the interpretation of his early development. I quote from *Poetry and Truth* the description of the arguments Goethe had with other children:

They then brought forward a story which they pretended to have overheard from their parents; my father was the son of some eminent man, while a good citizen had shown himself willing to assume outwardly the paternal office. They had the impudence to adduce all kinds of arguments, as, for example, that our property was only derived from the grandmother,

that the remaining offshoots of the family, who had settled in Friedberg and elsewhere, were alike without property, and there were other reasons of the sort which only derived their weight from malice. I listened to them more composedly than they had expected, for they stood in readiness to run away if I looked as though I should seize their hair. But I replied quite calmly, and this is what I said: "Life is so sweet that we can regard it as a matter of complete indifference to whom one is indebted for it, for at least it must be derived from God, before whom we are all equal." So they let the matter drop for this time, as they could make nothing of it. We continued to play together, which among children is always a well-recognized means of reconciliation.

By these malicious words, however, I became inoculated with a sort of moral disease, which kept on in secret. *I was not displeased with the idea of being the grandson of some eminent man, even if this had not occurred in a lawful way. (Italics are mine.)* My sagacity followed up the scent, my imagination was aroused, and my acuteness put in requisition. I began to investigate the statements of these fellows, and found or invented for them new grounds of probability. I had heard little said of my grandfather except that his portrait, with that of my grandmother, had hung in the drawing-room of the old house. After the building of the new one both of these had been kept in one of the upper rooms. My grandmother must have been a very beautiful woman and of the same age as her husband. I remember also to have seen in her room the miniature of a handsome man in uniform, with star and orders, which, after her death during the confusion of the house building, vanished along with many other small pieces of furniture. Such and many other things I stored together in my childish head, and practised early that modern poetic talent which knows how to obtain the sympathy of the whole cultivated world by a wonderful combination of the important events of human life.

But as I did not venture to entrust such an affair to anyone or even to ask the most remote question about it, it was not lacking in a secret diligence in order, if possible, to come nearer to the truth of the matter. (7)

And this is Goethe's concluding remark on these recollections:

... and though in the sequel I was compelled to regard this reproach as a thoroughly idle story, the impression still remained for me, so that I could not omit examining from time to time critically and testing all the noblemen whose portraits had remained very clearly in my imagination. So true is it that everything which confirms a man inwardly in his conceit, flatters his secret vanity, is so highly desirable, that he does not ask further whether in other respects it can contribute to his honor or shame. (8, 9)

These are fantasies with which psychology — especially child psychology — is familiar today. Goethe, as a child, had the inclination found in many people to spin a fanciful story about his family history. Such a myth always tends in the direction of the "birth of a hero", as Otto Rank demonstrated in his well-known book, *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*. (10) The basic details of the myth are that the hero, or the great man, is of mysterious origin. At birth he was exposed to danger, had to be hidden, and saved from drowning or some other catastrophe. We know this myth in various forms ranging from that of Moses to that of Lohengrin.

One wonders: Did not Goethe as a child identify himself with Moses? In his early youth, through the Biblical story of Moses, Goethe became acquainted with the earliest version of the myth of the hero, a version which was not only generally accessible at the time but also the purest and clearest version known then. (The Assyrian Sargon myth, an even earlier version, was made available to the general public only through the scientific research of the 19th century.) Moses is the only Hebrew boy of his generation who sur-



vives, all other new-born boys having been killed at Pharaoh's command. At the beginning of the description of his life and in the report he gives of his birth Goethe states that he almost died immediately after birth and that his grandfather Textor, in connection with this incident, i.e., the endangering of his grandson immediately after birth, suggested and brought about an improvement in midwifery and obstetrics in Frankfurt am Main.

Goethe was aware of the dangers consequent upon childbirth even in his childhood. He witnessed the death of one little sibling after the other, as, for example, at the age of ten he saw his younger brother, Jacob, die. Thus, one may say that at an early, impressionable age, when he was especially susceptible to new experiences and unconscious comparisons, he found himself in a situation similar to that of Moses in the Biblical legend, who had a sister, Miriam, and a brother. We may also assume that Goethe's mother, who was nearer to him in age than to her husband, may have represented to him the Egyptian princess, while his father assumed the rôle of the Pharaoh.

Goethe, however, does not mention the Biblical story of Moses, although he does mention many Biblical figures and even relates extensive portions of Biblical history, i.e., the story of the patriarchs. We may, therefore, assume that he identified himself with some of the Biblical figures. In this respect, moreover, we need not rely only on assumption. Goethe states this fact explicitly in *Poetry and Truth*. In one passage dealing with his childhood he talks about his search for God: "To this Being the boy could ascribe no form; he, therefore, sought Him in His works, and wished to erect an altar to Him in the good Old Testament way." (11) And then he goes on to describe in a very amusing fashion how he set fire to various objects by means of a burning glass, finally damaging his father's music stand. "All went as was devised, and the devotion was perfect. The altar remained standing as a special adornment of the room which had been given up to the boy in the new house. Every



one regarded it only as a well-arranged collection of natural curiosities; the boy, however, knew better but kept quiet." (12) Thus he had, as a six- or seven-year-old child made a burnt offering as a Biblical patriarch or a Jewish priest, in this way allowing himself to play with fire. Goethe also confesses his interest in the story of Joseph and mentions his version of it which, unfortunately, has been lost.

Although all through Goethe's life Moses was in his thoughts and despite the fact that the story of Moses' birth and youth is most impressive for children and would, therefore, seem a natural source of interest to Goethe, he never mentions Moses explicitly in his account of his youth.

This can be explained in the following manner:

(1) Goethe's identification with Moses occurred at a very early age. Bielschowsky is right in assuming that the Bible was the most important material for the child's early instruction at home. It was probably Goethe's mother who read or told the Biblical stories to him. (12a)

(2) The identification was forgotten, because it was linked with a hostile attitude toward his little brother. In the process of character formation this hostile attitude that began when he was four was looked upon at a very early stage as immoral, i.e., forbidden. Thus the disappearance of the identification with Moses would belong to the same mechanism of repression which caused the strange amnesia for all details of the life with the little brother.

At the same time it would become clear that the identification must have played a large rôle in Goethe's childhood. I feel tempted to believe that this identification, for the reasons mentioned above, was so strictly, or perhaps even more strictly forbidden than that other identification originating in the Old Testament legend on the occasion of his playing with fire. This incident was not forgotten because of the damaged music stand which served as a constant reminder to keep the memory alive.

Goethe's explicitly confessed, i.e., poetically expressed, identification with Joseph (when Goethe was 13 - 14 years

old) can be explained as a later and *permitted* substitute. The Joseph story, too, deals with rivalry among brothers, but the brothers do not die. The hero, half innocent, half guilty, suffers. The others are wicked while he is good and great. Finally, he triumphs over the brothers . . . In the story of Moses' birth, however, an essential point is that all other boys must die and only he (Moses) miraculously survives.

If we approach the first books of *Poetry and Truth* with an unbiased mind (disregarding for the time being that Burdach has proved Goethe's life-long interest in Moses) and ask ourselves what and whom Goethe represented, we must say: an individual who, from his childhood on, was destined for something great. The hour and the star of his birth point to something unusual. "I am a favorite of the gods," (13) he answers the old man in the fairy tale to which we have already referred. (14)

Of course, one could object that Goethe intended only later, at the threshold of old-age, to describe his youth in this manner. It is, however, possible to show that he took the same attitude very early in his childhood. This is especially evident in the apparently vague, wandering memories which he reports, without any interpretation, as, for instance, the breaking of the crockery and his fantasy about his father's allegedly illegitimate descent (15) from an unknown, important man, a fantasy he later looked upon with some contempt.

Our assumption finds unexpected confirmation, if, after directing our attention to certain problems, we turn to the conclusion of *Poetry and Truth*. I refer to the passage in which Goethe describes how at the moment of *the great decision* of his life, i.e., when he decides to accept Duke Carl August's call to Weimar, he impatiently tears himself away from the gracious hostess in Heidelberg, a friend of his family, with Egmont's words: "Child! Child! No more! Lashed as by invisible spirits the sun steeds of time go on with the light car of our destiny, and nothing remains for us but bravely and composedly to hold fast the reins, and

now to the right, now to the left, from a rock here, from a precipice there, to avert the wheels. Whither is he going, who knows? Scarcely can he remember whence he came!" (16)

If, contrary to the customary metaphorical exegesis, we interpret the last sentence in a literal sense, the concluding words of *Poetry and Truth* take on an overwhelming significance, epitomizing the secret leitmotif: ". . . Scarcely can he remember whence he came!"

All of this evidence points toward the pattern that has been called the myth of the birth of the hero. (17) One fact, however, cannot be denied. The Biblical Moses story must have been that form of myth which Goethe got to know first. Also, without the evidence of Burdach's investigation and findings that Goethe from the age of 23 to the end of his life was always occupied with Moses, *Poetry and Truth* alone proves clearly that he must have had the identification with Moses in his mind. The knowledge of Burdach's important investigation, however, makes the assumption an ascertained fact.

### III

We know today that all children tend to identify themselves with figures of legends and fairy tales. For a boy such as Goethe, who early in his life had had the experience of being spared (and thus, so to speak, having come into the sole and undisputed possession of his mother's love), the idea of applying the myth of the birth of the hero to himself is very close at hand. If the Biblical material had such a wide scope in the instruction of the child — as was customary at that time — such an identification would not be unusual. In the course of the thousands of years of our civilization millions of children must have identified themselves with mythical heroes, and among them the Moses figure. The identification may have left traces in the development of almost all of these children. But in the case of Goethe it is easier to observe and pursue this identification throughout his life because, first, he was a great poet and second, we

have such an abundance of documentary evidence from all stages of his life.

Thus, we came to realize what "cultural influences" look like and how they make themselves felt. In the case of Goethe it is an extraordinarily significant process which we are able to describe from its earliest beginning to its latest ramifications: certain experiences prepared, pre-shaped, so to speak, the child to absorb a certain story, or a certain figure. The developing personality as well as the adult individual, elaborating upon the childhood impression, incorporated it into his life and work.

Recalling Burdach's question (see p. 230), "What trait in Moses' character and fate offered the psychological point of contact?", we may answer: It was the danger surrounding the birth of the infant Moses and his miraculous salvation; and it was the fact that he was the only boy of his generation to survive. The identification was established by way of analogy: the danger that surrounded Goethe's birth, and the feeling of being chosen to survive.

It is possible that this was the first or one of the first identifications of his life. In any case, it occurred at an early stage and was forgotten — repressed — because it was connected with various emotional problems which were both significant and, at the same time, painful for the child, e.g., the rivalry with the little brother Jacob whose birth, as we have shown, Wolfgang, not yet four, did not like very much and whose death, when Goethe was ten, he did not mourn; or the craving for his mother's — his Egyptian princess' — exclusive love.

In the great tremor which shook Goethe's soul at the beginning of the 1770's when he was not yet sure of his calling as a poet or of his way, in this extreme mental turmoil that seized him the regression occurred: he again consciously recalled Moses. Two incidents precipitated this return to infantile attachment: Goethe had become acquainted with the Koran in which he read about Moses. He also read at this time in Herder's "Rabbinic Legends" the story of Moses'

death, which later was of decisive importance in shaping the final scenes in *Faust II*.

This is the first time that Moses was consciously remembered by Goethe. Later his figure will come to the fore at many crises: every time when Goethe comes in contact with a figure that offers the slightest resemblance to Moses. Time and again he is reminded of Moses because this figure has become an integral part of his being.

A thought, a concept or an idea becomes an integral part of our being in the true sense when we no longer know how and when the thought, concept or idea was born within us. . . (In the same way as in learning a foreign language, a word remains a foreign body as long as we know where and when we learned it. It becomes our own and is incorporated within us only when we have forgotten whence it came.)

Goethe also came across Faust for the first time in his youth when he saw the puppet play of Doctor Faustus. Actually Faust proved to be the more appealing figure, and one more suitable for identification, originating in an era much closer to Goethe than that in which the Moses story was created. For the Faust figure, the Faust of the *Volksbuch* — created by the myth-producing fantasy during the transition period between the Middle Ages and modern times (i.e., those modern times which embrace Goethe's and our own world) — furnished him the theme with which he could link up everything that moved him throughout his life. For, as Gundolf stated succinctly, Goethe expressed all his experiences twice, once in his other works and, then again, throughout his life in *Faust* (18).

Both the Faust story, a product of the late fifteenth century, and the Biblical Moses story, about three thousand years older, captivated Goethe's imagination at an early age and never lost their effect on him. With both figures he identified himself. The two fused into one in a noteworthy process of integration. This process is documented by Goethe's *Faust*, the greatest work he wrote, and also mani-

fested by his life which, many people think, is a monument greater than even *Faust*, a life which has not yet ceased to provoke the interpretation of every generation that has arisen after him.

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### FOOTNOTES

(1) This article is the first chapter of a forthcoming volume "The Origin of The Goethe Cult".

(1a) Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Berlin, 1912, I:358-403; II:627-659; III:736-789.

(2) This author's translation.

(2a) Friedrich Gundolf, Goethe. Berlin 1916 p. 27.

(3) Collected Papers, IV, 356-367. First published in *Imago*, V, 1917; reprinted in *Sammlung IV*. Folge. /Translated by C. M. J. Hubback.

(4) Freud, *Coll. Papers*, IV, 362, "Additional Note, 1294."

(5) *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 362/3.

(5a) By the way, it can be proved beyond any doubt, that Freud's interpretation is correct. It is supported by Goethe's own words in a later passage of "Truth and Fiction" (Part I, book 2). Goethe comments there on a fairy tale of his, 'The New Paris. A Boy's Legend', as follows: 'I subjoin, therefore, one of these stories which often hovers before my imagination and in my memory, as I had often to repeat it to my playmates.' The fairy tale is the report of a dream, in which he, when asked by an old man, 'Who are you?' answered 'A favorite of the gods.' (Quoted from R. O. Moon: *Goethe's Autobiography. Poetry and Truth. From My Own Life*. By Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Washington, Public Affairs Press, 1949.)

(6) Freud., *op. cit.*, p. 367.

(7) R. O. Moon, *Goethe's Autobiography. Poetry and Truth. From My Own Life*. By Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Washington, Public Affairs Press, 1949, pp. 53/54. Part of first sentence in this quotation from J. Oxenford's translation (Boston 1902) p. 67.

(8) *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

(9) Erich Schmidt, in his Goethe edition (published by the Insel Verlag) which is quite popular in Germany, omitted the greater part of this whole passage. He commented on it in the notes (Goethes Werke, 86 hrs 100. Tausend. Vol. 5. p. 565): "The boy's dreams about his alleged noble, illegitimate descent are omitted." Why did Erich Schmidt omit

this passage? We are probably correct in surmising that such objectionable and unflattering thoughts did not fit into the picture of Goethe which was to be presented to the German people.

(10) Oto Rank, *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*. New York 1914.

(11) Moon, *op. cit.*, I/1, p. 31.

(12) *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, I/1, 32.

(12a) Albert Bielschowsky, *Goethe*. München 1902. p. 17.

(13) Moon, *op. cit.*, I/1, 32.

(14) See note 6.

(15) Moreover, there is an allusion also in the delightful brief poem of which usually only the beginning is quoted:

From father I have the stature  
For earnest living without fail,  
From mother this uncaring nature  
This joy telling a tale.

In this context, the continuation will be of special interest:

**Great-grandfather was the ladies' man**  
/bold face is mine/  
This spook walks soon or late;  
Great-grandmother loved jewels which can  
over limbs palpitate.

Quoted from *The Permanent Goethe* (Selected by Thomas Mann, translated by Steven Spender). New York, Dial Press, 1948, p. 654.

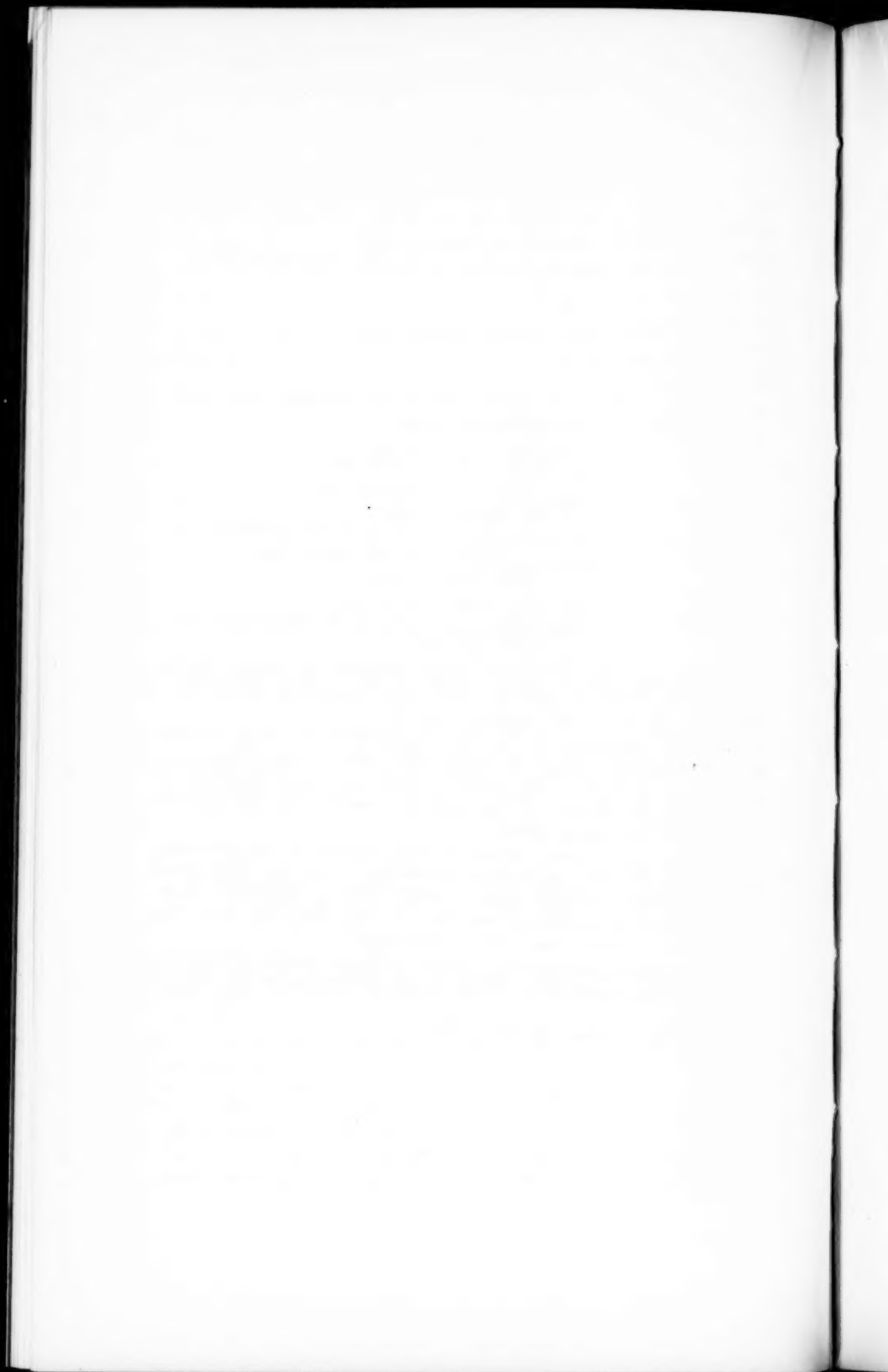
(16) Moon, *op. cit.*, p. 692: "Egmont", 2nd Act.

(17) Burdach emphasizes the fact that Goethe wrote his *Moses Treatise* in 1797, immediately before he turned again, after a long interruption, to work on his *Faust*... (The *Moses Treatise* was finally published in the notes to the *Divan*.) At the same time Goethe was also engaged in studies on Benvenuto Cellini:

"The two sturdy chaps turned up today together; if one sees them side by side, they have an amazing resemblance. I am sure you'll admit that this parallel wouldn't have occurred even to Plutarch!" (From Goethe's letter to Schiller of Jena, May 27, 1797, XIV, Vol. 12, p. 130, 5-10 German edition. This author's translation.

Also Cellini's autobiography, which interested Goethe to such an extent that he translated it, clearly shows the scheme of the birth of the hero.

(18) Friedrich Gundolf, *op. cit.*, p. 134





# THE THREE WOMEN IN A MAN'S LIFE

Theodor Reik

## I

There is an unknown melody that has been haunting me now for several days. It appears sometimes very clearly and sometimes only the first bars are heard by the inner ear as a faint echo. It came like an unannounced guest one has once known, but whose name one has forgotten. Its repeated emergence irks me now and I try to turn it away as if the unrecognized guest had stayed too long and has become wearisome. If I but knew what that tune is! I am searching in vain in my memory. I must have heard it long, long ago. Where was it?

Was it not in the Vienna Opera? It occurs to me that the melody I do not recognize must have something to do with my father. . . . My memory calls his image up . . . his face . . . his sidewhiskers . . . his beard was like Kaiser Franz Josef's . . . or rather like Jacques Offenbach's. . . . The image of the composer emerges quite distinctly as if it were a photograph. . . . The penetrating eyes and the pince-nez on a ribbon. . . . And then I know suddenly what the melody is: the aria of Antonia from *The Tales of Hoffman*. As if a floodgate had been opened, an abundance of images emerges. When my sister and I went to the Vienna Opera for the first time in 1901, I was 13 years old.

We had heard our father speak about the *Tales of Hoffman* before. At the first performance of Offenbach's opera in 1881 a terrible fire had consumed the Vienna Ringtheater. Many hundreds of people had perished; my father had saved himself by jumping from a window. Many superstitious persons in our city, at that time, had tried to establish a connection between the catastrophe and the personality of the composer. They said Offenbach had an "evil eye" whose glances had magical power to harm people. They

called him a "jettatore", meaning a wicked sorcerer. Poor Offenbach, whose picture we had seen and in which we had discovered a likeness to our father, had in fact not lived to witness the opening performance of his opera.

*The Tales of Hoffman* had not been performed in Vienna for a long time, in fact, not until 1901. My sister and I were agog with anticipation. In those days, the performances of the Opera were a frequent subject of discussion in the homes of the middle-class people of musical Vienna. We had often heard the orchestra praised and the individual singers evaluated. Then there was the new director whose artistic and creative zeal had revolutionized the old institution and who had become the subject of bitter contention and ardent enthusiasm. Every one of the performances which he conducted aroused a storm of controversy: his lack of respect for tradition which he had once characterized as "sloppiness", his startling innovations, his musicianship, and his inspired energy which demanded perfection from himself and those working with him. His name, which we heard spoken so often at home, was Gustav Mahler.

Memories emerge of our first night at the Opera House; the crowded theater, the box reserved for the Court, the tuning of the instruments. The lights are out now; only stage and orchestra are illuminated. Hurrying toward the conductor's stand we see a man of small stature with the ascetic features of a medieval monk. His eyes are flashing behind his glasses. He glances, as if in fury, at the audience that applauds his appearance. He raises the baton and throws himself, with arms uplifted, ecstatically almost, into the flood of melody. Gustav Mahler.

## II

Slowly the curtain rises. There is a student's tavern, the young men drinking, boasting, and jesting. Hoffman, the poet and musician, appears on the scene and is teased by his comrades because he has fallen in love once again. They ask him to recount the story of his foolish amours

and he begins: "The name of my first beloved was Olympia. . . ."

The play takes us back, in the ensuing act, to what happened to young E. T. A. Hoffman as he met Olympia in the home of the famous scientist Spallanzani, whose daughter she appears to be. It is love at first sight, with no realization that she is not a living woman but an automatic doll, fashioned with the utmost skill. The charming girl is seen at a party. When Spallanzani pushes a concealed button, she speaks, she walks, she sings and dances. Hoffman confesses his love for her and is elated when he hears her "yes." She dances with him until exhausted, then her father or maker leads her to her chamber. Then, a malignant looking man by the name of Coppelius enters in a rage and claims to have been swindled by Spallanzani. Vengefully, he manages to slip into Olympia's chamber and to smash the magnificent doll Spallanzani's cleverness had wrought. E. T. A. Hoffman is made the butt of the assembled guest's ridicule for having fallen in love with a lifeless automaton.

The second act takes place in Venice, at the home of beautiful Guiletta, who receives the young poet as graciously as she does all the other young men to whom she grants her favors. Dapertutto, a demoniac figure, bribes the siren to make a play for Hoffman's love. She promises to the ardent poet the key to her bedroom. He, however, gets into a fight with another of her lovers and kills him. She jilts Hoffman, who finds her chamber deserted and spies her, in the embraces of another, entering a gondola which floats down the Canalo Grande.

The third act is laid in Munich, in the house of old Crespel, with whose fair daughter Antonia Hoffman has fallen in love. The girl has inherited her mother's beautiful singing voice but also her fatal disease, consumption. Father and lover plead with her not to sing. But Dr. Mirakel, a physician and an evil sorcerer, makes her doubtful again when he reproaches her for giving up a promising

career. In her presence he conjures up the spirit of her dead mother who joins with Dr. Mirakel in his exhortations to break her promise and to continue with her singing. Antonia yields and dies while singing her aria. Dr. Mirakel, then, disappears, emitting peals of triumphant, mocking laughter, leaving father and lover prey to their despair.

In the epilogue, we witness the same scene as in the beginning: the students singing and jesting, shouting "bravo" to Hoffman's tale of his thwarted love. He, in turn, proceeds to drown his grief in drink.

When I went to the opera that evening, I had expected a light and amusing operetta in the manner of "Belle Helene" or "Orphee aux Enfers", with sparkling melodies, debunking gods and heroes of Greek mythology. But this opera was so different. It made a deep impression on the thirteen year old boy. For many weeks afterwards, some tune from *The Tales of Hoffman*, such as the charming aria of Olympia, the chorus of the guests, the moving aria of Antonia, haunted me. Images from the performance recurred to the inner eye: there were the evil and demoniac figures of Coppélius, Daportutto and Dr. Mirakel, played by the same singer. They appeared as personifications of a mysterious power that destroys again and again the young poet's love and happiness. Also, the image of the pale face of Gustav Mahler himself reappeared, looking like a sorcerer, like a spiritualized Dr. Mirakel, performing wonders with the orchestra. And then the female figures, played, as they were, by the same singer: Olympia, Guiletta and Antonia. They appeared to be three women in one, a triad which is always the same. There was, in the boy, a forknowledge or presentiment of a deeper meaning behind the succession of the three loves and their tragic endings, but this concealed meaning eluded him whenever he tried to penetrate the mystery.

### III.

When I heard the opera again, almost twenty years later, that which had been dark, became transparent. It

was like developing an old photographic plate. The chemical processes to which the plate had been subjected in the meantime, had made it possible to obtain now a positive print. The triad had revealed its secret in the light of what I had learned and experienced in psychoanalysis.

In every one of his attachments, young Hoffman had met an antagonist called variously, Coppelius, Dapertutto and Dr. Mirakel. This secret opponent was out to defeat the poet; he turned the beloved against Hoffman or destroyed her. At the beginning we see Hoffman infatuated or in love. We see him broken in spirit, in misery and despair, at the end. The easily inflamed passion of the young man meets an antagonistic power, self-deceiving and self-harming, which cause him to fail. That which makes him luckless and miserable is conceived as outside forces. But is it not rather some agent within himself emerging from dark subterranean depths? The sinister figures, who blind him about Olympia, who cause Guiletta to jilt him, and to bring death and destruction to Antonia, are personifications only of a foiling power which is an unconscious part of Hoffman himself. This hidden factor which frustrates him each time in the end, is operative already in his choices of his love objects. As if led by a malicious destiny, as if thwarted by a demon, he falls in love each time with a woman who is unsuitable: Olympia, a lifeless automaton, Guiletta, a vixen, and Antonia, doomed from the beginning.

The personalities of the three women, themselves, as well as the sequence of their succession, seem to express a concealed significance, hint at a symbolic meaning behind the events. It is as if the author was presenting not only the particular case of this German poet and musician, Hoffmann, but beyond that a situation of universal significance. Does the play want to say that every young man follows such a pattern in his loves? Yet our feeling balks at such a meaning. We find ourselves at a kind of psychological impasse, both willing and recalcitrant to believe, feeling a

fusion and confusion of emotions which oppose each other. We sense there is a hidden general meaning; yet what happens to E. T. A. Hoffman, especially his loves for those strange female characters, is so specific and personal that it cannot relate to us.

The closest coincidence to the love life of the average young man may be seen in Hoffmann's infatuation for Guiletta, the heartless, Venetian courtesan, who wants to enslave him for reasons of her own. Her charm fills him with consuming fire, he puts himself in bondage to her ready to sacrifice all to his passion. Need we search here for a deeper meaning? We have the lady of easy or absent virtue, who plays with all men and with whom all men play. Here we really have a type which is to be found in every man's life; the object of uninhibited sexual wishes, the mistress desirable in the flesh.

But what should we think of Olympia? We meet here with an odd love object, something almost incredible. The girl walks and laughs, speaks, dances and sings. She is, as Hoffmann discovers later and too late, really only an automaton, which does not function unless her clever creator pushes certain buttons. Where is the place of such a strange creature in every man's life? Should we assume that the author wanted to give an exaggerated caricature of the baby-faced, doll-like darling who has no life of her own, the girl without brains and personality, the society glamor girl, the plaything and toy? Such an interpretation is tempting, it makes rational sense, but remains unconvincing. And Antonia? Should she be regarded as the woman who hesitates between choosing a man or a career? But her character does not tally with this concept. The outstanding feature, after all, is the menace of death connected with her singing.

If we tentatively accept these rational concepts, we arrive at the conclusion that the author wanted to portray three typical figures who play a role in a young man's life. They are the child woman, the siren, and the artist, or a

woman who oscillates between wanting to be a wife or to follow a career. Olympia, Guiletta, and Antonia would then represent three types whom every young man meets and finds attractive in different ways, appealing as they so to the playful, the sensual, and the affectionate part in him. Was this in the writer's mind when he created the three women, representative of their sex? Have we now reached a better understanding?

If we have, we do not feel satisfied yet. Something warns us against contenting ourselves with such an interpretation. Should we give up our attempts at searching for a deeper meaning in the three female figures? Should we not rather take them at the value of their beautiful faces? We cannot do it. We cannot escape the haunting impression of a concealed significance. There is the repetitive character in spite of individual variations, the hidden logic which gives the play its tragic atmosphere. The sinister figures of the mysterious antagonist intensify the impression. They give to the events on the stage a sense of something preordained and fateful which cannot be accidental. Other traits too make it evident that the author was well aware of the veiled significance, for instance, the remark of one of the students after Hoffman has told the story of his loves: "I understand, three dramas in one drama."

Besides and beyond such small but telling items in the text, there is the force of this music in which the secret power of the inevitable, the shadow of near death, and the spell of destiny have been transformed into song. This power is felt in the playful and sparkling tunes of the students, in the Mozartian entrance of the guests, in the sweet aria of Olympia, and in the alluring baccarole of Guiletta. It laughs and mocks in Dr. Mirakel's tunes. It pleads in Hoffmann's confessions of love, in the exhortations of the dead mother, and in Antonia's swan song. There is something in the conjuring power of this music, in the depths of feeling it stirs, in the death-fear and death-desire it



pours into unforgettable melodies, which does not allow you to escape from this haunting sense of a concealed significance. Whether or not the librettist meant to express a symbolic meaning, there can be no doubt that the composer did. There is more in the events on the stage and in this music than what meets the eye and the ear.

#### IV.

Impossible, that the interpretation of the three feminine figures has reached the deepest level yet. They must be more than mere types of women, even if they are also that. There is something more meaningful in the three acts than the choice of three girls and three disappointments in love. The rational concept of the meaning of the three women all of a sudden strikes me as superficial, flat, and banal. It is very possible, even probable that such a commonplace was in the mind of the writer, but unconsciously he said more than he consciously knew, expressed a meaning beyond his grasp. It should not be forgotten that the French librettist took the material of the text from *The Tales of Hoffman* from various novels by the German writer Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffman (1776-1822), whom he then made the leading figure of the opera. In these stories, Hoffman showed a strange mixture of the realistic and the phantastic, of the grotesque and the tragic, creating a ghastly, haunting atmosphere even there where he depicts only every day events. Offenbach's melodies communicate to you the deeper insight; they speak immediately to your emotions, alerted as they are by the hidden element of the dramatic action, although the plot itself presents only the surface aspect of something elusive and mystifying.

In a situation like this, psychoanalytic interpretation comes into its own, furnishing a key, as it does to a locked room, allowing us to penetrate below the surface of conscious thinking. There is not much of a mystery about Guiletta: she remains the "courtesan with brazen mien" as she is called in the play. What might give us food for thought is rather her place in the sequence of the female



figures. She stands in the middle, following after Olympia, the doll, and preceding Antonia over whom looms the shadow of death. Since Guiletta represents the woman who arouses and appeals to man's sensual desires, promising their fulfilment, her middle position in the sequence suggests the interpretation that in her is represented the figure which governs the mature years of a man's life.

More intriguing is the personality of Olympia. How does this doll, the child-woman appear in the light of psychoanalytic interpretation? What can be the significance of her appearance in Hoffmann's life, with this mixture of features, both grotesque and pathetic? Freud has taught us that the hidden meaning of many dreams, neurotic symptoms and other products of unconscious activity remains obscure as long as their manifest content alone is taken into consideration. In certain instances the concealed meaning of a dream, for example, can only be understood by reversing important parts of the dream plot. Then, and only then, and in no other way, may the meaning be unravelled from the distortions in such cases. Olympia is a doll who speaks and moves and sings only if and when appropriate buttons are pushed, when she is being led and manipulated. If we are to reverse the story, we get the picture of Hoffman being led by hidden strings like a marionette. Or, if we go one step further, he is made to walk and talk and sing and act like an infant. The reversal of this part of the plot seems thus to place the story of Hoffmann's first love in his infancy. The poet appears in the reversal as a little boy, and Olympia as representing his mother who plays with him. He cannot act independently of her, and follows her about. If we are willing to trust this psychoanalytic interpretation which, after all, does not sound any more phantastic than the story of Hoffman's first love in the operative plot, some meaning in the succession of the two figures dawns on us: Olympia and Guiletta. If Olympia represents the mother, the first love-object of the small boy, then Guiletta is the woman loved and desired

by the grown man, the object of his passionate wishes, the mistress who gratifies his sensual desires.

But what is hidden then behind the last figure? Who is concealed behind Antonia? When we trust to psycho-analytic interpretation, this riddle will not be hard to solve. Antonia vacillates between her love for Hoffmann and her love for music. She disobeys the warnings not to sing and dies. When we reverse the contents again, as we did before, we arrive at the following meaning: Hoffman, the poet, vacillates between his love and his art, and he dies. In the sequence of the plot, Antonia is the last image of woman as she appears to the old man. Antonia is the figure of death. The three female figures appear to us now in a new light: Olympia as the representative of the mother, object of the love of the helpless and dependent little boy; Guiletta as the desired mistress of the grown man, Antonia as the personification of death which the old man is approaching.

It is at this point in our attempts at unravelling the hidden pattern of meaning behind Offenbach's opera, that the mental image of the composer himself emerges, shaded by the knowledge of his life story. Can it be incidental that he, already fatally ill, worked feverishly at this, his last opus which he hoped was going to be his best accomplishment? They called him then in Paris "Mozart of the Champs Elysees". Mozart, his beloved and revered master, knew when he composed his *Requiem* that he would die soon. Offenbach too realized that his end was approaching. He put his full creative power into his work, and he died after it was completed like Antonia during her swan song. In the demoniac tunes of Dr. Mirakel are all the shudders of the approaching annihilation. All passionate longing for life and light is poured into the third act. Offenbach wrote to M. Carvallio, Director of the Paris Opera: "Hurry to produce my play. Not much time is left to me and I have only the one wish to see the opening performance." He knew he had to complete his work even if his efforts would accelerate his death. It did. He died a few

months before the opening night. Like Antonia he perished in his song.

It is not accidental that E. T. A. Hoffman, the hero of the opera, was himself a musician as well as a poet. The identification of Offenbach with the figure of Antonia is also indicated in her passionate desire to become an artist like her mother whose spirit exhorts her to sacrifice all to her singing. Offenbach's father was a singer in the synagogue and a composer of Jewish religious music.

The psychoanalytic interpretation here presented may seem forced to the reader unfamiliar with the methods of eliciting unconscious meanings. It will be helpful to point out that the symbolic significance here discovered is only a restatement in new form of an old motif well known from numerous ancient myths and tales. It can be called the motif of the man and the three women one of whom he has to choose. Freud gave the first psychoanalytical interpretation of this recurrent plot in one of his less known papers (1). He deciphered the concealed meaning in the material of *Lear*, which Shakespeare had taken from older sources. The old king stands between his three daughters of whom the youngest, Cordelia, is the most deserving. Goneril and Regan vie with each other in protestations of their affection for the father, but Cordelia "loves and is silent". In the last scene of the drama, Lear carries Cordelia, who is dead, across the stage. Freud elucidated the hidden significance of this scene by the process of reversal. It means, of course, the figure of death who carries away the body of Old Lear, as the Valkyries carry off the slain hero. Traces of this original meaning can be seen already in the scene of Cordelia bending over her "childchanged father". As is frequently the case in dreams about persons dear to the dreamer, Cordelia's silence in itself signifies unconsciously that she is dead, that she is death itself in a mythical form.

The same motif, displaced, distorted and elaborated, appears in another one of Shakespeare's plays. The Portia

scenes in the *Merchant of Venice* reveal to the interpretation of Freud an unexpected aspect. Portia will yield her hand to the man who, among three caskets, chooses the one which contains her picture. Here we encounter a hidden symbolism which we already know from Greek antiquity: boxes, chests and other receptacles are symbolic substitutes for the female body. In the Bassanio scene of the play, the motif of the man who has to choose between three women is thus expressed in symbolic form. Bassanio prefers the casket which is leaden to the gold and silver ones:

" . . . but thou, thou meager lead,  
Which rather threatenest, than dost promise aught.  
They paleness moves me more than eloquence."

The features of paleness, like silence in the case of Cordelia, appear frequently in dreams to signify that a figure is dead: persons who are deathly pale or who are voiceless represent dead persons or death itself. Antonia in *The Tales of Hoffman* is a singer, it is true, but to sing is forbidden to her and it is her song which brings about her death, silences her forever. In unconscious productions, opposites may stand for each other, can replace each other. The secret similarities between the two Shakespearian plays become transparent: an old motif appears in the one in a tragic, in the other in a light version. What is in reality inevitable and preordained, namely that in the end man has to yield to death, is here turned into a free choice. That which threatens is changed into wish fulfilment — a result itself of wishful thinking. There are hints which point to the original meaning, to the kind of a choice involved. ("Who chooses me must give and hazard all he hath" says the leaden casket "which rather threatenest than dost promise aught" to Bassanio.)

Let me follow the old motif into the realm of the fairy tale where we meet with it frequently in its diverse forms, for instance, in the story of Cinderella who is the youngest of the sisters, and conceals herself. We can trace it farther back to the Erynnyes, Parcae and Moiras, the goddesses of

fate who are standing guard over individual destiny. The third figure among them is Atropos, who cut the thread of life. Corresponding to the Parcae are the Norse in Germanic mythology who, too, are conceived as watching over human fate. They rule over gods and men alike, and from what is decreed by them neither god nor man can escape. Man's fate is determined by them at the hour of the child's birth, by what they say to the newborn infant. The word fate (*fatum*) itself, is derived from the same root as "word" or "that which is spoken". That what they say in magic words is a man's fate. Derived from the same Indo-German root, the word "fee" in modern German, the word "feie" in old French, and the Irish adjective *fay*, which is contained in *fairy*, all originally denoted goddesses of fate. In many fairy tales the fairies are represented as bringing gifts to a newborn infant. In most instances they appear as beneficent, as kind, lovely, well-wishing figures. But in some of the stories their original fatal character re-emerges behind the benign aspect.

In conformity with the psychological law of the opposite which can replace one aspect by its protagonist in our unconscious thinking, the goddess of death sometimes appears under the aspect of the great goddess of Love. In most ancient mythologies the same female figure has both functions like Kali in India, Ashtar with the Semitic tribes, and Aphrodite with the Greeks. Yes, indeed, it is wishful thinking which succeeded at last in transforming the most terrifying apparition into the desirable, the female figure of death into that of the beloved.

We look back at Offenbach's opera: *Olympia, Guiletta, Antonia*. Here are three women in one, or one woman in three shapes: the one who gives birth, the one who gives sexual gratification, the one who brings death. Here are the three aspects woman has in a man's life: the mother, the mistress, the annihilator. The first and the last characters meet each other in the middle figure. In mythological and literary reactions the representatives of love and of destruc-

tion can replace each other as in Shakespeare's plays, or they succeed each other as in Hoffmann's tales of thwarted love. In his three loves a reaction formation unfolds itself: the woman chosen appears in each beginning as the loveliest, most desirable object, and always, in the end, represents doom and death. It is as if her true character reveals itself only in the final scene. For as long as the reaction formation is in power, the most terrible appears as the most desirable.

Behind all these figures is originally a single one, just as in the triads of goddesses whom modern comparative history of religion has succeeded in tracing back to their prototype of one goddess. For all of us the mother is the woman of destiny. She is the *femme fatale* in its most literal sense, because she brought us into the world, she taught us to love, and it is she upon whom we call in our last hour. The mother as a death dealing figure became alien to our conscious thinking. But she may become comprehensible in this function when death appears as the only release from suffering, as the one aim desired, the final peace. It is in this sense the dying soldiers call for their mothers. I can never forget a little boy who, in the agonies of a painful illness, cried: "Mother, you have brought me into the world, why can't you make me dead now?"

It is noteworthy that the motif of one man between three women appears in an earlier opera of Offenbach, who took an active part in the choice and shape of the libretto. The *Belle Helene* uses a plot from Greek mythology: Paris, son of Priamos, has to choose between Athene, Hera and Aphrodite. The charming aria of the mythological playboy says: "On Mount Ida three goddesses quarrelled in the wood. "Which", said the princesses," of us three is the fairest?" Here, again, we have the motif of choosing, this time in a frivolous version. To the young ladies' man Hera promises power and fame, Athene wisdom, but

" . . . the third, ah, the third  
The third remained silent.

She gained the price all the same."

Is it not strange that Aphrodite, the goddess of love, remains silent? She does not speak, yet she is eloquent. In the end the young prince chooses her, only it is not choice, it is necessity. She is not only the goddess of Love, but also of Death. *The Tales of Hoffman* tell and sing the role of women in a man's life; that is to say: in every man's life.

#### VI.

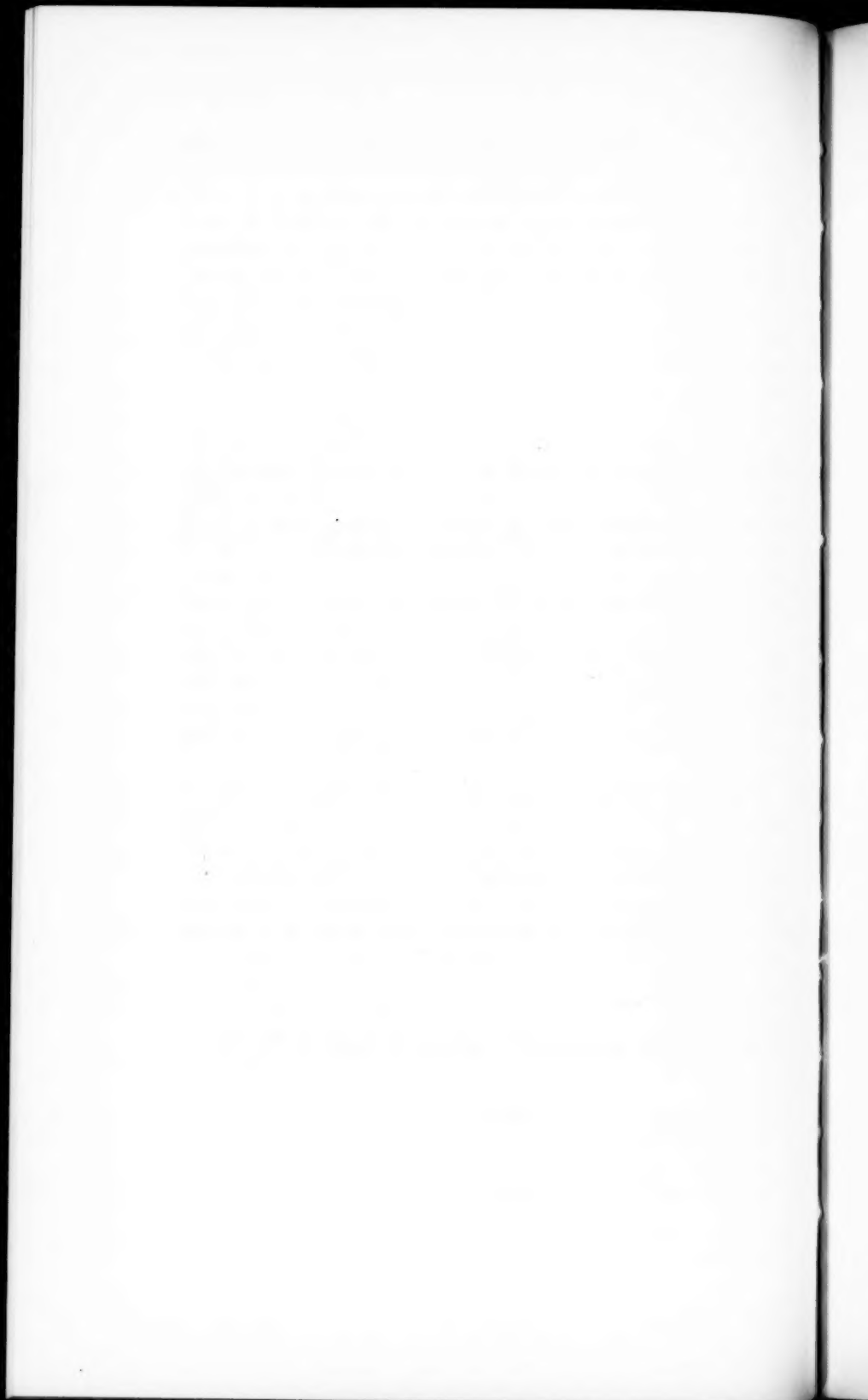
I now remember when the melody that haunted me for several days first emerged. It was a week ago on my way back from the Public Library. I had looked up something there. Before leaving I had seen on a desk a book which was a biography of Jacques Offenbach. I took it, looked at the composer's picture and ran over the pages reading a paragraph here and there: the story of his childhood in Germany, his struggle and triumph at Paris, his way of composing, the feverish working on the score of *The Tales of Hoffman*. He had a presentiment he would not live to see the opening night of the opera. He felt the end was near. He died a few months after he had reached sixty one.

Walking home through the streets that evening I thought of the book I am working on and a sudden anxiety overcame me that I would die before finishing it. It occurred to me that I had passed sixty one a few months ago. And then the aria from the *Tales of Hoffman* emerged and the unrecognized melody began to haunt me as if it wanted to remind me of something one would like to forget.

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(1) Das Motif der Kaestchenwahl, Gesammelte Schriften. Vol. X.







## COLERIDGE'S "KUBLA KHAN"

By

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and

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In reading the *Kubla Khan* of Coleridge, "that most notable fragment, which breathes in every word and line the spirit of adventure, unreality, and glamorous escape from reality" (12), I was for a prolonged period struck by its want of — and I know no better or nearer term — poetic value. It remained a mystery to me why it should be so highly praised, for I recognized in it nothing more than a rather grotesque fantasy of a type not unsuited to an addict's pen, but quite lacking in that high spiritual beauty which so informs and perfuses *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Not until recently, on re-examining the preface of 1816, did the clue to its meaning, its complex and apparently random imagery, and the influence which it seems to exercise over the imagination of others, become clear.

"The author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as *things*, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort." (4) How on waking, he proceeded to commit those impressions to paper until summoned on business, Coleridge then relates, and how, on return to the project, the entire structure of the proposed poem had vanished from mind, save only those fragments which were already written. It is with this small portion that analysis must be concerned; and analysis first of all requires a digression into Silberer and Freud.

Silberer was first to conceive that dreams might possess, in addition to their psychoanalytic, an anagogic, interpre-

tation (6). At this conclusion he arrived by observing his own hypnagogic sensory images, that accompany the decline of the somnolent mind from the high abstract level of diurnal human thought into the simple and concrete symbolisms of the dream. The process of thought is not broken off immediately, but passes over without interruption into dream images substantially reminiscent of the antecedent thought processes. From this he deduced that in the dream itself there were to be discerned, apart from those elements which stem from the unconscious and primarily sexual origins, elements representative of the more elaborate reflections of the waking consciousness, and that the dream is compounded of these two. With this hypothesis, Freud took issue, remarking that, although in some cases, he could agree, he believed that in those few cases the images retained only an allegorical affinity to the abstract conscious processes, and that the choice of symbolism was determined rather from the unconscious, so permitting that the unconscious needs be condensed with the remnants — fast disappearing in sleep — of the conscious intellectual techniques. (6) In most dreams, he thought, the unconscious needs are prime, their expression being controlled only by the intervention of the censor, which serves to repress, or change out of recognition, material the conscious perception of which would inflict pain on the dreamer. From this elementary construct the Freudian theory of dreams was derived, and it is of importance in the consideration of Coleridge's poem because the poem was composed — "if that indeed can be called composition" — in a dream.

Let us first dispose of the possibility that the dream consisted primarily of hypnagogic sensory images. According to Coleridge's own account, "In consequence of a slight indisposition, an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effect of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in *Purchas's Pilgrimage*: 'Here the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden there-

unto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground were inclosed with a wall.' " (4) On Silberer's hypothesis, the following elements of the poem are accounted for: Xanadu, Kubla Khan, pleasure-dome (although the phrase will support another interpretation), the general nature imagery, and the lines:

"So twice five miles of fertile ground

With walls and towers were girdled round."

The supposition that the dream merely continued the train of thought inaugurated in the waking state is clearly, therefore, inadequate: it must be supplemented.

There remains Freud's complementary supposition that, although the dream images stand in allegorical relationship to the thought processes of the waking state, they are psycho-analytically determined from the unconscious, and represent sexual needs, infantile or other. From this point of vantage, the permutation of "palace" into "pleasure-dome" acquires profound interest, for "pleasure-dome" may be taken to symbolize the female sexual parts. The remaining symbols correspondingly are:

"the sacred river"	ejaculation
"caverns measureless to man"	vagina and uterus
"sunless sea"	amniotic fluid
"fertile ground"	womb
"walls and towers"	labia
"gardens bright with sinuous rills"	labia
"incense-bearing trees"	sexual odors and pubic hair (cf. musk-deer)
"forests ancient as the hills"	pubic hair and mons veneris
"sunny spots of greenery"	flesh
"deep romantic chasm"	the portal
"cedarn cover"	pubic hair

There follow the lines:

"A savage place! as holy and enchanted  
 As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted  
 By woman wailing for her demon-lover!"

and these lines bespeak an emotional affect opposite to that suggested in the preceding description: where all was luxuriant and inviting there, the prospect is here marred by the words "savage," "waning," "haunted," "wailing," "demon." It may be surmised that the aspect of the female parts could not be steadily regarded without qualms, being, as they are, under the strictures of religion, as once "holy and enchanted."

The poem continues:

"And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,  
 As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,  
 A mighty fountain momentarily was forced;  
 Amid whose swift half-intermittent burst  
 Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,  
 Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:  
 And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever  
 It flung up momentarily the sacred river."

and in the above passage there is evidently a contradiction, if the chasm is to be understood as the portal; for the river, as has been suggested, must represent the male ejaculation, and this cannot issue from the female parts. There is, however, a female part, also a "pleasure-dome," which does emit such a river, namely, the breast; nor is it uncommon for the female genitalia, the male membrum and the female breast to be condensed interchangeably in the dream image. I would urge, therefore, that the key to the mixed structure of the above lines lies in a condensation of these three anatomically distinct areas, and for substantiation of the postulate it is not essential to search far afield. *Christabel*, a composition of the same year with *Kubla Khan*, is a story of lesbianism (1): the fair Geraldine is a witch capable of many guises who feeds on the vital spirit of the innocent Christabel. When (according to Coleridge's project of completion) the time arrived that her assumed character was threatened with discovery, she was to have changed abruptly into the form of Christabel's knight-errant, and although her

pressing suit under this mask for Christabel's hand in marriage was to have aroused in its object a strange loathing, the nuptials were only to have been avoided by the entry of the true suitor, unexpectedly home from the wars, at which juncture Geraldine supernaturally vanishes (1). In this tale the figure of humanity as neither male nor female, or alternately either, and occasionally both, is particularly clear: the supernatural transformation of Geraldine into a man is neither supernatural nor a transformation — she is merely a woman with a fantasied penis. As an active lesbian she is therefore equipped with breasts, vagina and penis — a true androgyny. But the most curious circumstance about this tale is that Coleridge could never finish it, although he knew how it should end, nor carry it beyond the point at which Christabel, having succumbed to the charms of Geraldine, is mastered by a sense of guilt: "The reason of my not finishing Christabel is not that I don't know how to do it — for I have, as I always had, the whole plan entire from beginning to end in my mind; but I fear I could not carry on with equal success the execution of the idea, an extremely subtle and difficult one." (1) How subtle and difficult the idea proved to be we may conjecture, when it is recalled that the supernatural was to be imported at the end as a *deus ex machina* to solve the original problem; and it may be thought that the difficulty lay precisely in this importation of the supernatural into a story otherwise devoid of that element. Moreover, it is known that publication of the tale was anticipated by Coleridge with something like trepidation (1), lest the suspicion of moral errancy be imputed to himself, and that he was overjoyed when no such aspersions were actually cast. Had it been a tale of the supernatural in fact, clearly no such fear could have arisen, nor the paranoid self-reference been elaborated.

From this point the "sacred river" returns to its earlier connotation:

"Five miles meandering with a mazy motion  
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,

Then reached the caverns measureless to man,  
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean. . ."

In the foregoing portion, only the phrase "lifeless ocean" merits peculiar note: if the ocean is the amniotic fluid of the womb, "lifeless" can only imply a fear lest the ejaculated seed, not alone itself perish, but in some manner reflect death upon its source; and with this, the profound orgasm anxiety (10) which afflicted Coleridge is first made plain. The impression is immediately confirmed by the subsequent couplet:

"And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far  
Ancestral voices prophesying war!"

The "tumult" of intercourse is interrupted and made pleasureless by the superego threatening castration: the "ancestral voices" are properly called "ancestral" because the superego originates with the parents, and "voices" because the superego is largely inculcated by auditory admonition (5). The mixed affect produced by the idea of intercourse is neatly recapitulated in the next section:

"It was a miracle of rare device,

A sunny pleasure-dome with *caves of ice*."

Immediately hereafter there occurs the most astonishing transition of the poem, should it be interpreted in orthodox fashion as just another lyric, but a transition which follows logically and inevitably should the above exegesis be accepted:

"A damsel with a dulcimer

In a vision once I saw. . . ."

and he proceeds to tell that:

"Could I revive within me,

Her symphony and song. . .

I would build that dome in air,

That sunny dome! those caves of ice!"

The fantasy reveals that, *did he know* a suitable woman, he would enjoy intercourse, but the prospect again evokes the disturbing note:

"And all should cry, Beware! Beware!

His flashing eyes, his floating hair!

Weave a circle round him thrice,

And close your eyes with holy dread,"

then, reverting to the original androgynous image, ends thus:

"For he on honey-dew hath fed,  
And drunk the milk of Paradise."

The concluding lines, if the foregoing analysis is substantially correct, point by indirection to fellatio, cunnilingus and deep oral attachment to the mother.

The hypothesis rests, not alone on the content of the poem, but on the events of Coleridge's life. In the year 1797, he completed *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and began *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan*: the first-mentioned work was the only one of the three which he completed. The following year witnessed the production only of an apostrophe to liberty entitled *France: an Ode*. These four poems comprise his most notable relictia. In 1800 he settled at Greta Hall: "The coming of Coleridge to Keswick coincided with the ebbing of his creative power." (12) He became addicted to opium; and the remaining years of his life were marked chiefly by the production of *Ode to Dejection* (1802), *Youth and age* (1832) and *Work Without Hope* (1825). The addiction and the consuming melancholia alike point to an insinuating oral psychosis. As in the case of Leonardo, so brilliantly discussed by Freud (7), the encroachments of the neurosis were attended by increasing inhibition of the creative abilities; but the example of Coleridge is the more interesting because the inhibition occurred without an interval straightway after the forbidden material promised to rise to consciousness and affected the work at hand directly. The instance of *Kubla Khan* is particularly illuminating: the dream was repressed into the unconscious as soon as the waking faculties were re-established, and persisted there as the punitive superego of the melancholic. It may be conjectured that Coleridge could only have persisted in the composition of poetry if the examination of human sexuality had been permitted to him: and this, of course, was not feasible in 19th century England.

Before concluding the study of his poetry, it is necessary to allude to certain aspects of the one completed long poem,



*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. A finished work of art combines, without outraging either, the needs of the id and the requirements of the superego — or (to employ the terms of Silberer and Freud) artistic, like hypnagogic sensory, images, while they stand in allegorical relationship to the processes of conscious thought, must stand also in true symbolic relationship to the unconscious. The symbols can then be interpreted in either direction, as an allegory of daily life or as a mirror of the unconscious. Classic verse is more likely to be anagogic in structure and so present obstacles to psychoanalytic treatment, while Romantic verse, springing like the automatic writing of Andre Breton from surreality, is more readily converted into psychoanalytic terms. From the above examination of *Kubla Khan*, it is clear that both this poem and *Christabel* too closely related to the unconscious complexes for the design to be consummated, but *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, with its problems of sin and guilt, is cast in an atmosphere theologically and morally more pure. The forbidden figure of the woman is presented in two forms, as the White Goddess:

“Her lips were red, her looks were free,  
Her locks were yellow as gold:  
Her skin was as white as leprosy,  
The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she. . .

and later as the Queen of Heaven:

“To Mary Queen the praise be given!  
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,  
That slid into my soul.”

and the translation from the domain of Life-in-Death to that of eternal life is procured by a typically Romantic purgation through love of Nature:

“O happy living things! No tongue  
Their beauty might declare:  
A spring of love gushed from my heart  
And I blessed them unaware;  
Sure my kind saint took pity on me  
And I blessed them unaware.

That self-same moment I could pray;  
And from my neck so free

The Albatross fell off and sank  
Like lead into the sea."

The transformation of the Mother-Goddess into the Blessed Virgin has been adequately treated by Robert Graves (9), who points out, moreover, that the attributes of Astarte and Mary could only be reconciled in the nativity-scene. A still more superficial layer of repression than that which produced the phallic narcissism (10) of the Greeks was consolidated in the human character structure with the introduction of Christianity and saintly discipline into the waning Empire (8); and upon this relatively late tradition that sexuality is evil, except possibly in the context of parenthood, the culture of Western Christendom has until now securely rested. So it is that the vocabulary appropriate to this culture has omitted all reference to the phases of the Moon (13); instead, it was requisite to speak of "sin," "purgation," and "Grace." For the symbolic representation of these concepts, the story of the albatross was more than sufficient: sensuality in such guise troubles neither the conscience internally nor the outward status quo of social position; and Coleridge could bring to completion this one, and this one only, of his projected longer poems.

When the practice of verse became forbidden to him as overly dangerous, Coleridge turned to the theory of verse and the safer medium of prose. Together with Wordsworth, he had from an early period indulged in speculation: "During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbors, our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry: the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colors of imagination. . . The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would

naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in this sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them or to notice them when they present themselves." (2) The poems of nature were to be the province of Wordsworth, while Coleridge was to concern himself with those of supernatural character, and "With this in view, I wrote *The Ancient Mariner*, and was preparing, among other poems, the *Dark Ladie* and the *Christabel*, in which I should have more nearly realized my ideal than I had done in my first attempt." (2) But Wordsworth apparently had the easier time of it, for "Mr. Wordsworth's industry had proved so much more successful, and the number of his poems so much greater that my compositions, instead of forming a balance, appeared rather an interpolation of heterogeneous matter." (2) The relative ease and difficulty with which their respective designs were consummated are quickly explained: Wordsworth, by projecting the creative impulse onto nature, was able to perceive it as proceeding thence in the form of a circumambient and benign influence; while Coleridge, in his pre-occupation with the "delusions" under which human beings suffer, and whence their sense of the "supernatural" springs, was bound sooner or later to investigate the qualities of human nature itself.

The difficulties which he then confronted are analytically explicable, for the "truth of nature" is not outraged by being equated with the reality principle, nor the "modifying colors of the imagination" by being identified with pleasure principle; in which case the poetic problem, as suggested in an earlier paragraph, (and as Coleridge in other terms expressly states), demands a reconciliation of the two. "The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of

the faculties to each other, *according to their relative worth and dignity* (Italics mine - B.). He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity that blends and (as it were) fuses each into each, by that synthetic and magical power to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power, first put in action by the will and understanding, and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed control (*laxis effertur habenis*), reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; *a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order;*" etc. (Italics mine - B.) (2)

In the above quotation, the creative urge is pictured as subordinate to the "will and understanding" — that is, to the superego and ego — which set the creative urge in motion and control it thereafter. In simpler terms, the poetic process is conceived as follows: the will, which recognizes the intrinsic value of things, chooses its subject; the imagination embellishes it with appropriate ornament and detail — or, in general, the form dominates the matter, which is indifferent. There could scarcely be a more erroneous evaluation of poetry, as the analysis of *Kubla Khan* perhaps sufficiently indicates. But the necessity of such a view to one who must defend himself against id impulses which threaten to become manifest and violate the morality of his time, is clear: "As a living poet must surely write, not for the ages past, but for that in which he lives, and those which are to follow, it is, on the one hand, natural that he should not violate, and, on the other, necessary that she should not depend on, the mere manners and modes of his day." (3) And since to make the necessary into a virtue is not an unusual proclivity, the idea could be elaborated into a little fantasy of the superiority of modern over ancient times, in which the saving grace of modernity is seen to proceed from the pure and benign influence of a Higher Religion: "Whilst Dante

imagined himself a humble follower of Virgil, and Ariosto of Homer, they were both unconscious of that greater power working within them, which in many points carried them beyond their supposed originals. All great discoveries bear the stamp of the age in which they are made; hence we perceive the effects of the purer religion of the moderns, visible for the most part in their lives (sic!); and in reading their works, we should not content ourselves with the mere narratives of events long since passed, but should learn to apply their maxims and conduct to ourselves." (3) And the tocsin of this pious morality is sounded even more clearly in defence of Shakespeare: "Shakespeare has no innocent adulteries, no interesting incests, no virtuous vices. . . Shakespeare's fathers are roused by ingratitude, his husbands stung by unfaithfulness; in him, in short, the affections are wounded in those points in which all may, nay, *must*, feel." (Italics mine - B) (3) Whatever the word "must" — whatever the categorical imperative of Kant — may mean to the philosopher, to the unprejudiced observer it can only mean compulsion; and amid the high comedy, worthy of Shakespeare alone, which invests the comments of the author of *Kubla Khan* on the ends of poetry, the observer must perceive with mixed pity and amusement the attempt of a man who has foregone the practice of poetry because of its fundamentally sexual nature to make it the loyal and devoted handmaiden of an ethics by its nature asexual. It is a profound reflection on the devious ways of human intellect, that one of its chief representatives could deem himself better, because less productive, than his predecessors; and nearer to God, because farther from mankind.

Coleridge offers a prime example of the artist annihilated by the society and morals of his time. The miracle of the bees and flowers, the whole Romantic attachment to Nature, was at length the only means which permitted him expression of the strong vital impulses on which his creativity was founded, while the taboos incident to his time and place crushed and introverted the remaining portion. Kipling

could opine, "Remember that in all the millions permitted there are no more than five — five little lines — of which one can say, 'These are the magic. These are the vision. The rest is only poetry.' " And the five lines are:

"A savage place! as holy and enchanted  
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted  
By woman wailing for her demon-lover."

and:

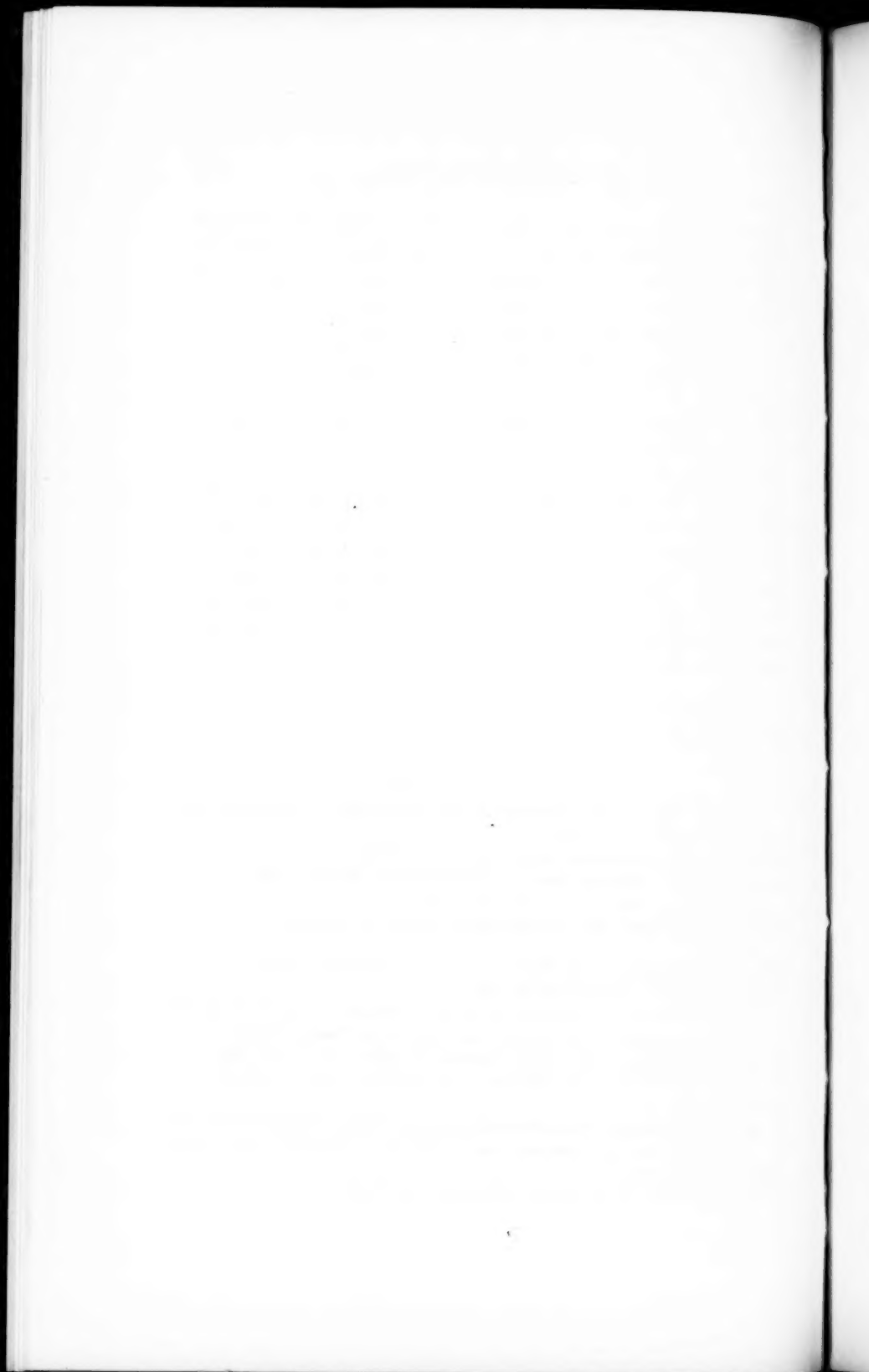
"Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam  
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn."

With this, it is allowed possibly to conclude that the great secret of the Romantic movement was the attempt to liberate those vital energies which not alone the preceding Classicism, but the whole institution of Western Christendom, had conspired to suppress or at least divert into useless compulsive outward activity — a deliverance which our own age, after the long pause of the Victorian Restoration, has again assumed as its duty and salvation (11).

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## A NEW MISCONCEPTION IN LITERARY CRITICISM

by  
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Literary criticism is at present faced with a dilemma: both the personality of the writer, and his artistic product are not explainable without the application of psychoanalytic concepts. This fact, however, is still taboo. (1) The result is that new subterfuges must be sought for and found. The latest of these fashions involves the supposed discovery that a specific writer is at bottom a frustrated actor. The formula has been recently applied to both Dickens and Poe. Further discoveries are in store.

This misconception is based on complete misunderstanding of both the psychology of the writer and the psychology of the actor.

What is the "material" with which the *writer* works? Reduced to the simplest common denominator, one can state that an "idea" occurs "from nowhere" (unconscious) which is subjected to prolonged elaboration in the forming of the plot. This done, the writer starts to write. This sequence of events has a genetic basis in which "imagination" corresponds to voyeurism, the act of writing down to an exhibitionistic defense. In the inner lawbook of the writer, exhibitionism is the "lesser crime." (2) Hence a voyeuristic-exhibitionistic chain reaction is set in motion.

The *actor* elaborates on the identical material in a completely different way. (3) In the analysis of a dozen actors, I found with astonishing regularity recollections of terrifying peeping experiences, so full of terror that the real experience had been short-changed into a game or play. By making the real into the unreal, fear was alleviated. Later in life, in the sublimation of acting, passively experienced infantile voyeuristic terror was short-changed into an active exhibitionistic defense via the "unconscious repetition com-

pulsion." This went so far that the roles were fully reversed: not the child peeps in the dark at "forbidden" sexual performances of others, quite the contrary—the spectators of a stage or screen performance are the peepers at the now harmless play. *They* are in the darkened auditorium, the actor in the limelight. A perfect alibi reversal from passivity to activity!

Thus, both writer and actor fight with identical infantile peeping conflicts, warded off with defensive exhibitionism. Still, there are decisive differences. These are: (1) the future actor has been frightened more profoundly than the future writer. Proof positive is the amount of "conscience money" paid by the actor. This conscience money consists of complete extinction of personality: the actor acts and represents *other people* and other people's emotions. His "originality" is confined to his "version" of the dramatis personae of the author. This "empty bag" alibi is the result of undigested infantile fear. In contradistinction, the writer creates "original characters", hence his voyeurism is less inhibited. Only in writers suffering from specific types of "writer's block" (4), does this imaginative function cease to exercise itself. Expressed paradoxically: if the writer had the same amount of voyeuristic fears as the still functioning actor, his head would be as blank as the unused piece of paper in his typewriter.

(2) According to Freud every exhibitionist identifies unconsciously with the spectator's voyeurism, and vice versa. This applies, of course, both to writers and actors. But—and this little but carries a good deal of weight—the actor's voyeurism of his own performance via unconscious identification with the spectator, does *not pertain to himself, but to the person he personifies on the stage!* This attempt at camouflage is the result of his more terrifying infantile experiences.

(3) The typical actor is a braggadocio sort, a poseur, a "ham." The typical writer is shy, withdrawn, gauche. (There are, of course, exceptions to the rule.) At first glance,

one could be misled into believing that the actor's exhibitionism is uninhibited, the writer's inhibited. The moment one accepts the thesis that under no earthly conditions do unconscious wishes come to the fore directly, but always camouflaged in the form of inner defenses (5), the picture changes. The strength of the defense indicates the strength of the Super Ego reproaches directed against the warded off material. On our assumption, exhibitionism is but the inner defense of the deeper repressed voyeurism; hence, the exorbitant exhibitionistic defense of the actor allows conclusions as to the strength of the infantile and frightening voyeurism.

(4) The transition from actor to writer is nowadays an extreme rarity. The opposite is more frequently encountered in reality; in conscious fantasy it is a typical occurrence. Every writer complains about his isolation in his room and envies people in the limelight. Some writers favor public lectures and reading their own works; others become unsuccessful dramatists (Zola); others directly try to act in their own plays (Aeschylus, Shakespeare).

(5) The penalties for a weakening in these defenses are stage-fright and writing block, in actors and writers, respectively. However, whereas stagefright always has but one unconscious reason (the alibi of "incognito exhibitionism" is not accepted any more by conscience), writer's block is far more complicated. The voyeuristic component can be involved, in which case no ideas occur. Or ideas do occur, but the exhibitionistic defense is inhibited—the writer cannot work out his plots on paper. Or both voyeurism and exhibitionistic defense are not yet inhibited, but the psychology "compass" gets faulty—the writer's dramatic personae act psychologically incorrectly; a mechanism which I have called production of "defensive trash." (2) Or the general oral-masochistic neurotic basis of the writer deteriorates as a result of the weakened defenses; other neurotic and pathologic defenses are used (e.g. alcoholism, homosexual or neurotic-heterosexual troubles) with disastrous effect.

(6) Exhibitionism is *the* defense of the actor; it is,

however, *only one among many others for the writer*. The writer's inner conflict pertains to the pre-oedipal mother to whom he becomes masochistically attached. To counteract this accusation of inner conscience, the writer uses intrapsychically a peculiar autarchic "unification" tendency (2): he eliminates mother. The inner defense runs something like this: "How can I be accused of being masochistically attached to mother? Mother doesn't even exist—I *give myself out of myself and to myself* beautiful words and ideas." However, the moment the alibi is not accepted by the accusing conscience, the next defense is instituted: "I don't want to be refused; *I refuse*." By acting the caricature of the "refusing" mother he furnishes his internal alibi, but the alibi makes him automatically sterile. This peculiar defense (accounting for 90% of all cases of writer's block) shows also that writing is possible only on the autarchic level; the descent from the alleged unity to a duality is fatal for productivity.

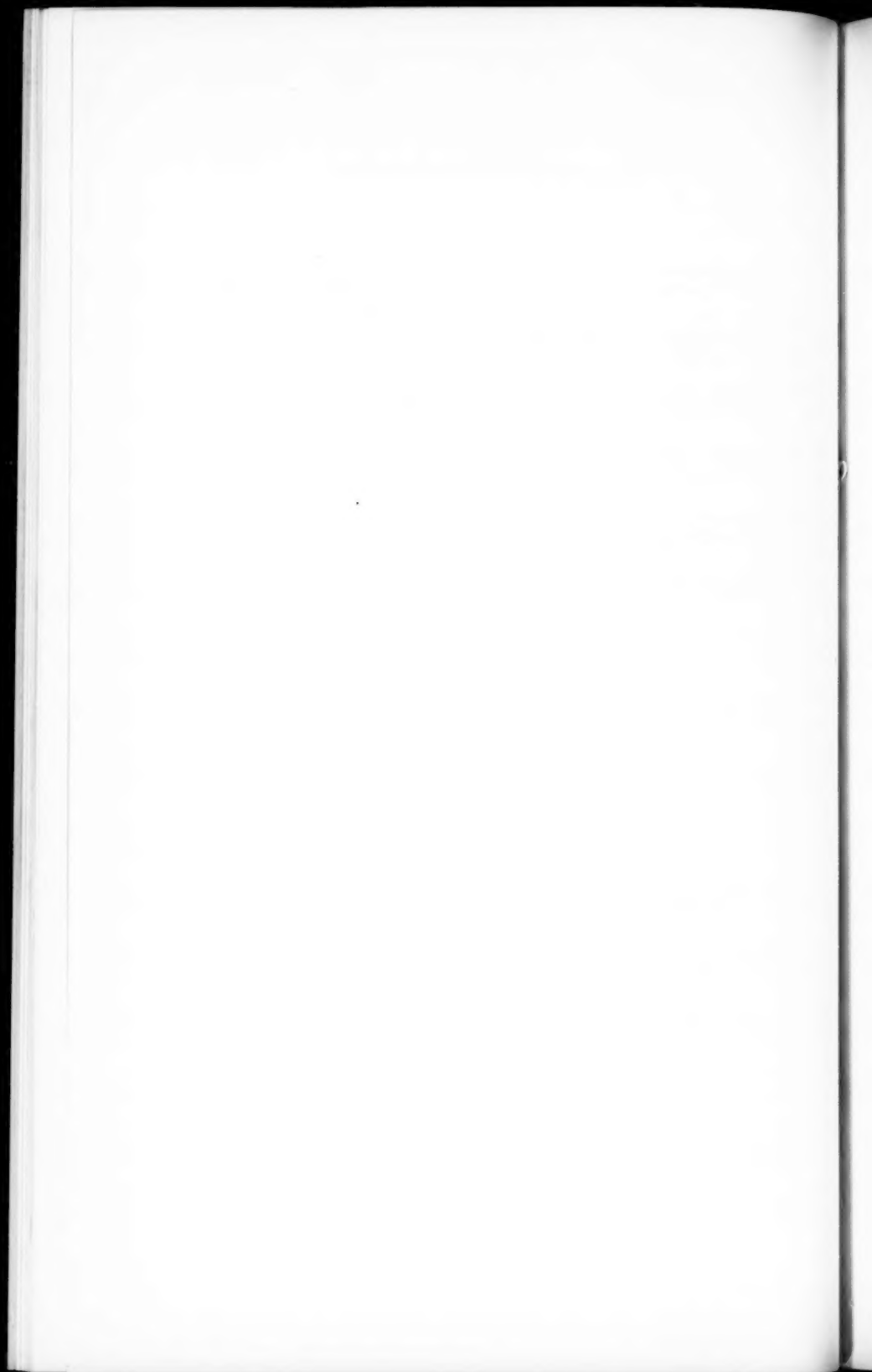
All this does not exist for the actor. He is always involved in his duality situation. He frequently gives the impression of a hysterical personality; he is not this, as his specific fears prove. (3)

Compare these highly complicated unconscious interconnections with the truly laughable naivete of the discovery that some writers are at bottom frustrated actors, and one is reminded of the old gag about the person who marveled at the sun's shining during the daytime. He reasoned this way: he could understand the moon shining at night—it was dark then; but why should the sun take the trouble during the day when there is plenty of light anyway? The fool conveniently forgot the source of light: the moon merely reflects a light which it does not have itself.

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## NOTES

- (1) There are but few exceptions. The most outstanding example is Dr. Arthur Wormhoudt whose first rate book **THE DEMON LOVER** (Exposition Press, N.Y., 1949) is an outstanding contribution to psychoanalytic literary criticism. Otherwise one encounters nowadays a grotesque caricature of pseudoanalytic fakism in literary circles. These people believe that the misuse of a few misunderstood termini makes for "analytic" literary criticism. Nomina sunt odiosa.
- (2) For a compilation of the extensive material see the author's book **THE WRITER AND PSYCHOANALYSIS** (Doubleday, N. Y., 1950).
- (3) "On Acting and Stagefright," **The Psychiatric Quarterly**, (in print).
- (4) See "The Artist's Relation to Society," **American Imago**, 1948; see also reference 2.
- (5) **THE BASIC NEUROSIS** (Grune & Stratton, N.Y., 1949); and **THE BATTLE OF THE CONSCIENCE** (Washington Institute of Medicine, Washington, D. C., 1948).



## THE SEXUAL SYMBOLISM OF HATS

by  
Marcus Grantham

Many years ago, in his *Interpretation of Dreams*, (1) Freud drew attention to the fact that a hat may very often be interpreted with certainty as a symbol for the male genitals. Later, in a short paper written in 1916, entitled *A connection between a symbol and a symptom* (2) he says: "The hat has been adequately established as a symbol of the genital organ, most frequently the male, through the analysis of dreams. It cannot be said, however, that this symbol is at all an intelligible one". In the same essay (3) Freud himself advances what he regards as a tentative explanation by saying that the symbolic meaning of the hat may possibly be derived from that of the head and its phallic significance, in so far as the hat can be considered a continuation or prolongation of the head. Again, in the *Introductory Lectures* (4) Freud writes: "Why hats and cloaks are used in the same way (i.e. as sexual symbols), is certainly difficult to divine, but their symbolic meaning is certainly unquestionable." Later, in his *New Introductory Lectures* (5), Freud was able to add some explanatory details regarding the symbolism of cloaks, but was still, apparently, unable to cast further light on the symbolism of hats.

Before we embark on a discussion of the derivation of this most interesting symbol, it will be instructive to consider some of the many ramifications of the symbol itself, and of the different cultural aspects in which its sexual significance may be discerned. I propose, therefore, to regard the occurrence of this symbol in dreams as unquestioned, since we can all verify it from our psychoanalytic experience (6). Instead, I propose to invite attention to the occurrence of this sexual symbol in everyday life, in superstitions, and also in the use of language.

In a motion picture made some years ago and released



again recently, entitled *The Pride of the Yankees*, there occurs a remarkable scene which is highly relevant to our subject. The picture deals with the life of a prominent baseball player named Lou Gehrig, and the famous Babe Ruth also features in some of the scenes. The two players were on the same team, the New York Yankees, at the time the incident I refer to took place. The film shows a railway compartment where all the members of the team are assembled, on their way home after one of their winning matches. All the players are in high spirits and are sitting playing cards and drinking. Babe Ruth enters the compartment wearing a new straw hat which he hangs up on a peg, and he then sits down and commences to play. Suddenly one of the players decides to play a prank on the unsuspecting Babe Ruth. He surreptitiously takes the Babe's straw hat down from the peg, bites a mouthful out of it, and begins to chew the straw. He then hands the hat to his neighbour who also bites a mouthful out of it and begins to chew. So the hat goes round to all the players, each of whom bites a mouthful out of it and commences to chew away. At last the hat is nothing more than a mangled wreck, and Babe Ruth looks up and sees what has happened. He then begins a good natured fight with all those who have played the prank on him.

It is a far cry to the modern cinema from those primitive times when savages cut off and ate the genitals of their captured enemies in order to incorporate the virility of their foes. But the unconscious mind of man at the present time is quite capable of bridging the gap, and thus we have, in the scene just described, an excellent example of regression to the oral cannibalistic stage of development. All the fellow players of Babe Ruth were ambivalent in their attitude towards him, consciously proud of his achievements, but, in their unconscious, envious of him and hating him. The urge to incorporate Babe Ruth's prowess within themselves by a symbolic cannibalistic act thus was the unconscious stimulus whence this scene of biting and chewing the hat was derived.

Interestingly enough, Babe Ruth's main accomplishment was as a hitter. The bat is itself a phallic symbol, and thus the players' envy of him in his capacity to wield the bat resolved itself into an envy of the virility of his penis. This, in turn, was symbolised by his hat. No doubt the ordinary castration *motif* is here present as well, but this by itself does not sufficiently account for the biting and chewing of the hat, which are undoubtedly symbolic acts significant of the desire for oral incorporation of the penis.

The destruction of a hat with an unconscious symbolic meaning finds further illustration in a superstitious ceremonial which is customary among certain of the undeveloped hill people who live in the Ozark regions of Missouri and Arkansas. In his book, *Ozark Superstitions*, (7) Mr. Vance Randolph says: "In some clans, when a baby boy is born, a sister of the babe's father comes to the house, looks at the child, and then burns the first hat she finds. No matter whose it is, nor how valuable, she just picks up a hat and throws it into the fireplace. Many people laugh at this and pretend to take it lightly, but it is never omitted in certain families. I know of one case where there was some doubt about the child's paternity, and the husband's family were by no means friendly to the young mother, but, despite all this, one of the sisters came and burned the hat; she did it silently and grudgingly and most ungraciously, but she did it. This practice is never discussed with outsiders."

In considering this interesting custom, we notice, first, that it takes place only when a male child is born. Secondly, the ownership of the hat does not matter, so that we may safely conclude that whatever symbolic meaning the burning of the hat has, it has no reference to the owner of the hat. Thirdly, we have the peculiarly interesting fact that it is always the sister of the child's father who carries out the act of burning the hat. I would venture with some confidence to assert that the hat is here a symbol of the penis of the newborn child, and that the burning takes place as a symbolic rite of circumcision, which is in itself a replacement of the

primal castration. We are also aware from dream analysis that the sister very often represents an identification with the mother, and I believe this to be the meaning of the sister in this custom. She would then represent the paternal grandmother.

Now it is noteworthy to observe, at this point, that in the Ozark regions the power and influence of women are very strong. In some clans it might almost be said that a matriarchal state of society lingers on, where the grandmother of the family exerts a sway over the lives and fortunes of both her children and grandchildren which has long since disappeared from other more developed regions. We know from a number of anthropological studies that the rite of circumcision on boys at puberty is performed among primitive tribes by an old man, i.e., a symbolic grandfather. I am not aware of any study dealing with circumcision in any primitive matriarchal state of society, but I would venture the assertion that it would be natural to find an old woman, i.e., a symbolic grandmother, performing the circumcision in such a society. If this be so, then we have in this Ozark custom a relic which enables us to reconstruct with a fair degree of probability what actually took place in the distant ages of the matriarchate. It should be pointed out, in this connection, that we find an example in the Old Testament of the circumcision rite being performed by a woman, where Zipporah, the wife of Moses, circumcises their son Gershom on their journey down to Egypt. (18)

The same dwellers of the Ozark regions have another superstition referred to by Mr. Randolph in his book (9) which again shows the phallic significance of the hat. Mr. Randolph writes: "It is said that if a girl steals the band of a man's hat and makes a garter of it, the original owner of the hat will fall in love with her at once." As in so many of the folk customs still prevalent at the present time, the belief in the power of what Sir James Frazer calls *homoeopathic* magic can here clearly be seen, and Freud, in his *Totem and Taboo* (10) gives a number of similar examples. Freud

also rightly points out (11) that, "there is no doubt about what is considered the effective force in all these examples. It is the *similarity* between the performed action and the expected happening". The hatband tied round the girl's leg as a garter is a symbolic expression of the insertion of the penis into the vagina, and this symbolic performance, with its accompanying unconscious idea of wish fulfilment, causes the man to fall in love with her. The operative mechanism here is that of the *omnipotence of thought* as Freud calls it (12), a mechanism sufficiently familiar to us from the study of primitive peoples and modern neurotics.

From a slightly different angle of approach, we find a similar superstition described by Miss Claudia de Lys in her book *A Treasury of American Superstitions*. She says (13): "There is an old superstition that if a woman, playfully or otherwise, puts a man's hat on her head, the man has a right to kiss her." The appropriation of the hat is a symbolic appropriation of the man's penis, and, in such circumstances, the man is undoubtedly justified in an erotic approach to her. In this superstition, as in so many others, we also have an instance of the truly remarkable way in which the mind of the masses retains its close connection with the unconscious.

Further superstitions with regard to hats are referred to both by Mr. Randolph and Miss de Lys in their books. The former says (14): "It is always bad luck to place a hat or a shoe or a rifle on a bed." Miss de Lys corroborates this (15), and explains that the belief with regard to hats stems from the Orient and the Near East, where a turban or headgear of any kind is never supposed to be placed where another person's head may rest. She quotes the further belief (16) that placing a hat on a bed will result in a quarrel between the owner of the hat and the owner of the bed. Now if we follow our interpretation of the hat as a symbol of the male genital, it necessarily follows, in my opinion, that the bed is to be interpreted as a symbol for the vagina. But why the bad luck? Here our psychoanalytic experience comes to our

aid, for we find that those neurotics who are obsessed with this phenomenon of bad luck invariably connect it in their unconscious with the performance of that which is forbidden and prohibited. Further, in a number of dreams which I have analysed, I have found that a bed is a symbol for the vagina, but not merely for the vagina in general. It often stands for a *particular* vagina, that of the mother. It is possible, then, to find the origin of the superstition we are at present discussing in the prohibition of incestuous childhood wishes of sexual connection with the mother, and the oriental version of the prohibition may be interpreted to mean that the son should never place his turban (penis) where the head (penis) of another person (i.e. his father) will be placed.

As we might expect, it is not only in undeveloped regions that these superstitions with regard to hats are to be found. They exist equally well in our modern big cities. Miss de Lys refers (17) to the habit of many big-city dwellers who "blow a gentle spray of saliva into their new hats for good luck." Here the connection between the act itself and the unconscious wish for sexual potency seems to be obvious. The men do it in regard to their own potency, the women, most probably, in regard to that of their husbands. Saliva as a symbol for seminal fluid needs, of course, no further comment. I have not yet had the opportunity of analysing anyone who was accustomed to carry out this superstitious practice, but, if such an opportunity were to arise, I should not be surprised to find that the man in question would be suffering from some degree or other of psychosexual impotence, or, if it were a woman, that she has developed a deep unconscious dissatisfaction with her husband's potency.

Closely allied to this particular superstition is one stated (18) to be quite common in the millinery shops of big cities. It is said that if the first customer of the day tries on a hat and goes away without buying it, the milliner thinks this will be a bad day for business. To remove this possibility, the milliner expectorates saliva into the hat. Here I am

able to provide a positive illustration of the underlying unconscious motives from the case of a highly successful business woman who was a well known designer of women's hats. Some years ago the millinery business began to decline considerably owing to the habit which women adopted of walking about hatless, and from this time onwards Miss W., a single woman of 35, began to exhibit various neurotic symptoms the exact nature of which has no relevance here. Analysis revealed unmistakable homosexual tendencies, and her very choice of a career as a designer of women's hats was unconsciously connected with her infantile desire to possess a penis. The lack of success she had in selling her new designs was connected in her unconscious with the idea of the rejection of her homosexual love, and, as a result, a neurosis developed. In a similar way, I believe that the milliner whose hat is rejected by the customer experiences unconsciously a rejection of her penis, and is therefore compelled, once more by a process of *homoeopathic* magic, to inject into the symbolic hat the equally symbolic saliva, for the purpose of rendering the offered penis more potent and, therefore, more acceptable.

At this point, before we leave the subject of superstitions, I hope that I may be permitted a short digression away from the main purpose of this paper, in order to lay stress on the importance of an analyst making himself thoroughly acquainted with his patient's superstitious practices and beliefs. I believe that many analysts tend to concentrate on their patients' obsessive practices, i.e., on what Freud aptly calls their *private* superstitions, without inquiring into the *general* superstitions which they hold. Valuable diagnostic insight may often be obtained in this way, and yet, as my experience shows, such general superstitions do not emerge unless specifically asked for during an analysis, *simply because* the patient recognizes them to be general superstitions, and, therefore, not referable exclusively to his own particular case.

Returning once more to the symbolism of hats, we can



recognize in the everyday life of women the sexual significance which they attach to hats. A woman who is depressed or suffering from anxiety (the sexual origins of which are, of course, so clearly known) will often say that she is going out to buy herself a new hat in order to cheer herself up. My wife, to whom this remark has often been made, followed this up on a number of occasions at my request. She found that the person making the remark had, in nearly all cases, not actually bought a hat but some article of wearing apparel or personal adornment. Further questioning brought out the fact that those women who used the expression quite consciously realized its figurative meaning to denote any kind of purchase. Nevertheless, the expression nearly always is "to buy a new *hat*", thus showing to my mind, that in the unconscious the depression or anxiety is intimately connected with sexual disturbance symbolized in the form of a hat. I am also indebted to my wife for pointing out to me that a recent fashion of women wearing a *triangular* kerchief over the head is, very probably, of phallic significance, the triangle or magic number three signifying the whole male genital apparatus. Of course I recognize that in connection with the expression "buying a new hat", there is other unconscious symbolism also at work, e.g., the sexual significance of spending money, but the symbolic connection of the hat still remains.

If we now turn briefly to the usages of language we find a hat often used to denote the whole person. This is a linguistic process termed by the grammarians *synechdoche* (the use of the part for the whole) and is equally well known to us from the psychoanalytic study of dream symbolism. Thus, we find the expression "a bad hat", used to denote a worthless person, but always worthless with a moral connotation, i.e., an immoral person. Thus, for instance, Walter Besant, in his *Children of Gibeon* remarks (19): "There are always bad hats in every family", while Miss Ngaio Marsh, in her book *Vintage Murder* (20), describes one of the characters by saying that "he's a more than usual thor-



oughgoing bad hat". There is an old Italian proverb which says: *Val piu una beretta que cento scuffie* (One hat is worth more than a hundred bonnets), and this is usually interpreted to mean that one man is worth a hundred women. But I suspect that originally this expression was coined with much more of a genital significance behind it. We further find the expression, My hat! used as a kind of exclamation mainly by schoolboys but also by grownups. We know that similar exclamations were originally used as oaths, as for instance, By Jove!, Zounds! (by God's wounds), Egad! (by God), etc., and I believe that the expression My hat! is, also, a contraction for the original oath, By my hat! This, then, would be a symbolic oath which replaced the earlier oath sworn on the penis itself. The method of taking an oath by the penis is age old, and is frequently found in Biblical literature under the euphemism of placing one's hand under the thigh of the person to whom the oath is made, as, for example, the following passage: "And the time drew nigh that Israel (i.e. Jacob) must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, *put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh*, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt." (21).

A similar symbolic meaning is to be discovered in the expression frequently used that if a certain event does, or does not, (as the case may be) materialize, the person speaking will eat his own hat. I believe that this expression, "I'll eat my hat," has no other meaning than an offer to castrate oneself, so convinced is the person talking that he is correct about the event in question. We find this expression employed in a slightly different context but with exactly the same symbolic meaning in Dickens' *Pickwick Papers* (22). The scene is where Mr. Pickwick is in prison and he has been sent to stay in cell number 27. The inmates of this cell are a butcher and a drunken parson, both in prison for various debts and misdemeanours. The butcher and the parson offer to pay Mr. Pickwick a weekly sum to keep out of the

cell, as it is already overcrowded. Mr. Pickwick expresses surprise that he should be allowed a choice in the matter, and says he thought that if he has been sent to stay in this particular cell he will perforce have to stay there. In answer to this, the clerical gentleman, as Dickens calls him, says: "Well, if I knew as little of life as that, I'd eat my hat and swallow the buckle whole." The expression here undoubtedly has the unconscious meaning that if the speaker were as sexually useless a person as Mr. Pickwick he would castrate himself, and this unconscious meaning is given an even keener edge when we remember Dickens' description of Mr. Pickwick as an elderly gentleman always afraid of being caught in the toils of matrimony.

An expression which has gained currency in recent years, having the same symbolic significance as the previous examples, is the phrase "a high hat", which is used to denote a conceited person. Mr. Max Eastman, in his book *Enjoyment of Laughter* (23), attributes the coining of this phrase to a certain Mr. Jack Conway, but the phrase is thousands of years older than the twentieth century. There is an ancient Chinese expression which says, *Ai tai kao mao tzu*, the literal translation of which is, he is fond of wearing the high hat, but which is always used figuratively, exactly in the same way as the modern phrase, to denote someone who is conceited. So, when we find that this term is explained by reference to a person who is fond of wearing one of the old fashioned high silk hats or else an opera hat, we shall be inclined, I think, to regard this as a kind of modern rationalization, and to believe that a high hat is really a symbolic reference to a person who shows the same kind of self-esteem as if he were the proud possessor of a large erect penis.

There is one further expression we find in current use which has, I confess, caused me insuperable difficulty in seeking an explanation of it in a psychoanalytic sense. I refer to the expression, *To knock someone into a cocked hat*. This is used to denote the figurative destruction or demolition

of a person. A literary example of this usage is to be found in the late President Woodrow Wilson's letter to Adrian H. Joline (24), where he writes: "Would that we could do something at once dignified and effective to knock Mr. Bryan once for all into a cocked hat." Now a cocked hat is explained in all the dictionaries to mean a brimless hat which is pointed both back and front, but this does not help us at all in elucidating the symbolic meaning of the expression. The very flavour of the expression, as well as its manifest meaning, convince me that a hidden sexual significance is to be discovered here, but what that significance is has hitherto eluded me. Perhaps some of the readers of this journal will be able to supply the necessary clues.

And now, having established the definite sexual symbolism of the hat in a much wider and more general sphere than that of dreams alone, it remains to seek for the connection, the *point d'appui*, between the symbol itself and the thing represented. Here we are reminded of Freud's difficulty to which we referred at the beginning of this paper, and we must acknowledge that, at first glance, we ourselves find the same difficulty. When, for instance, we find that a pencil is a phallic symbol, we can immediately discern a similarity of attributes. Both a pencil and a phallus possess length and rigidity and have a point from which something emerges. In the same way, the similarity of attributes between a room or a passage and their symbolic representation of one or other parts of the female genital apparatus is quite clear. But by what common attributes are we to connect a hat and a phallus? I think it will be generally acknowledged that Freud's attempt at explanation is hardly convincing, and he himself never regarded it as more than a provisional explanation. I myself believe that I have discovered at least one point of similarity, in a recollection I have of the time when I was a boy between the ages of ten and thirteen. I remember that I and my friends of the same age always referred to the glans phalli as "the policeman's hat", and if the bulbous shape of the glans is considered, it

will be seen to bear a definite resemblance to the shape of the helmets worn by police officers years ago. Now this shape of a police officer's helmet, with the rear portion going well down over the nape of the neck just like the brass type of fireman's helmet, has been a very common one throughout the ages, and was in no way originated with the introduction of a modern police force. We can go back, through the Middle Ages with their helmeted knights in armor, to the ancient Greeks whose warriors also wore the same type of helmet. Even in the ancient Mycenaean civilization of Crete the same shaped helmet is depicted on drinking cups and stone carvings, while the Babylonians and Assyrians also wore an almost identical type of helmet. My own view is that these helmets were actually originally modelled on the shape of the glans penis, in the same way as so many objects of utility in primitive times bore the unmistakeable stamp of phallic origin. If this be so, then the connection between the representation and the thing represented is definite and clear, and the transition from the helmet type of headcovering to the ordinary hat did not disturb the unconscious symbolism. The helmet was, of course, worn only by men, and thus the symbolic helmet and its successor the hat would refer to the male genital rather than the female. For the purpose of the further hypothesis that will be advanced in the succeeding paragraphs, we may also remember that, in all ages and countries, it was the custom to wear plumes or feathers on the helmet.

Finally, there is an even deeper cultural level at which we can discover a point of connection, and here we arrive, in my opinion, at the very root of the matter. There is, in the British Museum, in the Lansdowne Collection, (25) a manuscript written in 1599, entitled "A description of Hungary", by a traveller named Richard Hansard. He gives a graphic description of the very primitive state of the country at the time he travelled through it just before the end of the sixteenth century, and, in a passage dealing with the usages and customs of the country, he says: "It hath been

an ancient custom among them (i.e. the Hungarians) that none should wear a feather but he who had killed a Turk, to whom alone it was lawful to show the number of his slain enemies by the number of feathers in his cap." This illuminating passage immediately shows us what lies behind the commonly used expression "a feather in one's cap", to denote a victory of some kind, or the achievement of an advantage against someone or something usually in the face of difficulties. Both in the case of the passage quoted and also in the modern expression the feather is undoubtedly a penis symbol, and it has been used as such in all ages and languages. The etymological connection in Latin between *penis*, the male organ, and *penna*, a feather, is quite certain, while, from the modern point of view, we have further corroboration of the same symbolism in a dream reported by Stekel (26). This was the dream of an impotent man who dreamt of a hat with an obliquely-standing feather in the middle. In the same way, for the Hungarians of the sixteenth century and doubtless for their ancestors in numerous previous centuries, the feathers in their caps symbolized the number of male genitals they had cut off from their vanquished foes.

We may thus draw the legitimate inference that the plumes worn in their helmets by the armored knights of the Middle Ages would have denoted originally their prowess in battle and their victories over the enemy. Also, in this connection, we are reminded of the three feathered plume with the motto *Ich Dien* which has for centuries been the distinguishing coat of arms of the Prince of Wales. Legend has it that this coat of arms originally belonged to the old king of Bohemia in the thirteenth century, and that it was appropriated by the English Black Prince when he killed the king on the field of battle. (27)

It is not, in my opinion, stretching our hypothesis too far, to envisage a primitive time when, instead of the exhibition of a feather in the cap or helmet, the actual enemy genital was worn proudly in the hair, stretched erect and,

most probably, embalmed. If this is so, and anthropologists of much greater learning than I have in these matters will, I hope, confirm this, we possess here a most direct connection between the genital actually projecting upwards from the hair as an ornament, and the feather which later symbolically replaced the actual genital. From here to the symbolic phallic significance of the helmet and the hat is but one further short step, since, by a kind of unconscious displacement, the symbolic significance of the feather would be transferred to the helmet or the cap which carried the feather. We thus finally arrive at what I believe to be the original significance of this perennial symbol, and our inquiry has led us back to primitive times when that significance was much less hidden than it is at the present time.

Thus we are afforded, in this short study, yet one more example of the manner in which both the highways and the byways of psycholoanalytic penetration can open up the endless domains of man's unconscious. An infinite amount yet remains to be done, but, little by little, we are advancing along the trail first blazed by Freud the pathfinder.

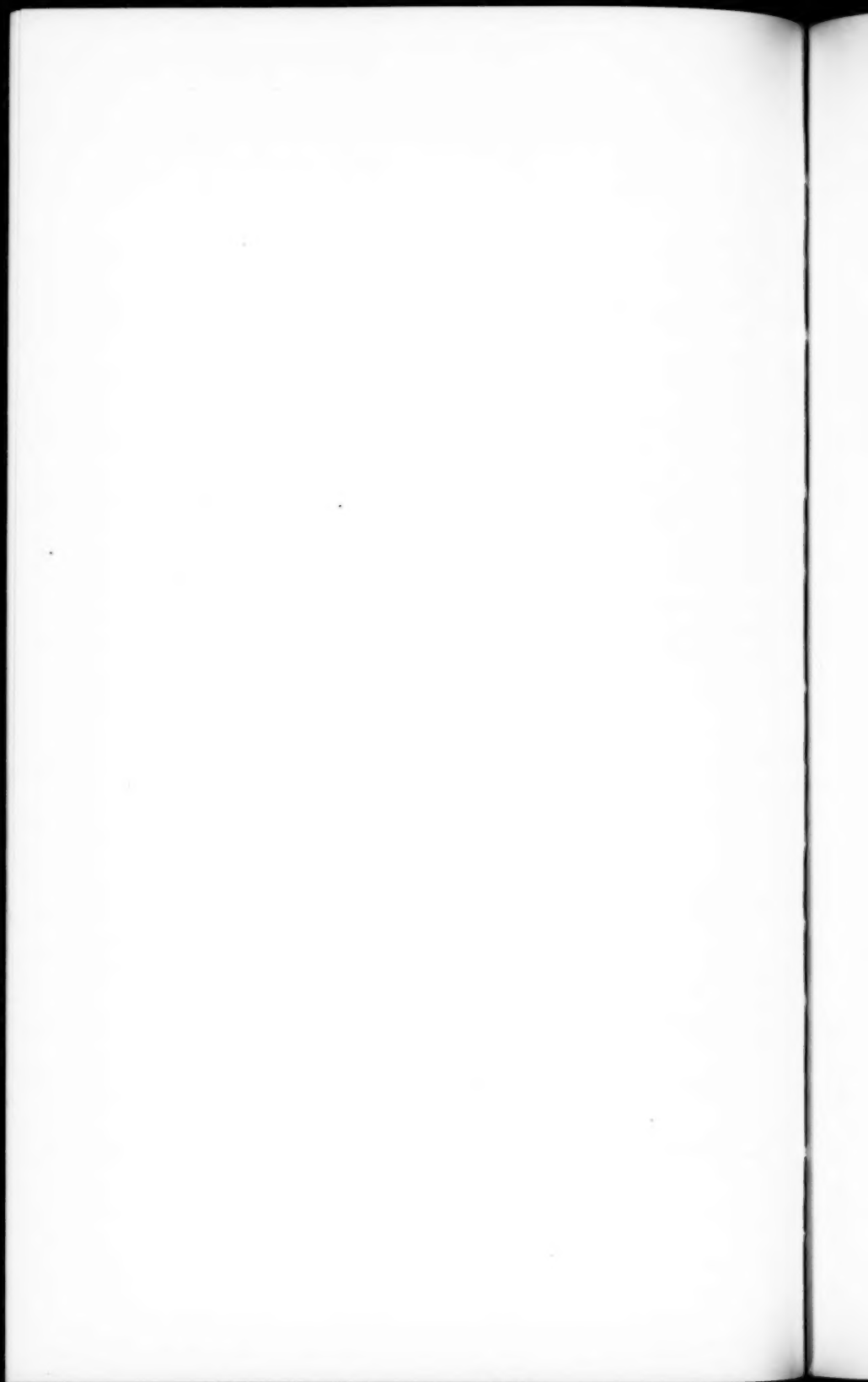
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#### FOOTNOTES

- (1) Third English edition, translated by A. A. Brill. p. 337. The Macmillan Co.
- (2) Collected Papers, vol. 2. p. 162. Hogarth Press, London.
- (3) *Op. cit.* p. 163.
- (4) Translation by Joan Riviere. Lecture 9. Garden City Publishing Co.
- (5) Translation by W. J. H. Sprott. p. 38. W. W. Norton & Co.
- (6) An example is given by Freud in the Interpretation of Dreams at page 341, where the sexual symbolism is very clear.
- (7) Ozark Superstitions p. 205. Columbia University Press. 1947.
- (8) Exodus iv. 25, 26.
- (9) *Op. cit.* p. 167.
- (10) The Basic writings of Freud. Trans. by A. A. Brill. pp. 865 et seq. Modern Library. 1938.

- (11) *Op. cit.* p. 869.
- (12) *Op. cit.* pp. 873 et seq.
- (13) *Treasury of American Superstitions.* p. 264. The Philosophical Library. 1948.
- (14) *Op. cit.* p. 74.
- (15) *Op. cit.* p. 267.
- (16) *Loc. cit.*
- (17) *Op. cit.* p. 263.
- (18) *Loc. cit.*
- (19) Bk. ii. Ch. 32. 1884.
- (20) P. 246. 1940.
- (21) *Genesis* xlvii. 29.
- (22) Everyman edition, p. 593. E. P. Dutton & Co. 1924.
- (23) P. 82. 1936.
- (24) Dated 29th. April 1907. See *Literary Digest* 20th. January. 1912.
- (25) Vol. 149. Ms. 775.
- (26) Quoted by Freud in a footnote at p. 342 *Interpretation of Dreams.*
- (27) Cp. on this subject Freud's remarks concerning the tripartite natural objects used in coats of arms on account of their phallic symbolism. *Introductory Lectures.* p. 146, where the clover leaf, the fleur de lys and triskeles of Sicily and the Isle of Man are given as examples.





# A CRITICAL FANTASY OR FUGUE

by  
Peter Dow Webster

All I am concerned with is a little flower, some horses, and two wounded boys, both of whom died. These symbolic elements are the projections of unconscious defenses against infantile fixations in Franz Kafka and William Shakespeare. My discussion will show that the highest function of art is not merely to conceal art, but also to conceal the artist—to protect and defend him from such inner self-knowledge as would impair or destroy his capacity to create. Between the conscious ego of the artist and his unconscious past there intervenes a protective layer of illusion, a land of mist and snow, through whose refractive mechanism we sense the profounder depths of the artist's inward identity. To Dr. Edmund Bergler we owe this modification of the older Freudian concept that the artist projected his depth complex immediately or his rationalization of this complex. We now believe the poem or story contains the depth only as it is disguised, transposed, or otherwise concealed by an unconscious defense against the nuclear complex within the unconscious itself.

I propose to illustrate this new hypothesis in a discussion of Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis" and Kafka's "A Country Doctor." Neither work is the greatest of the artist, but each suggests the principal function of art as a propitiation for unconscious guilt, an invitation for the reader to share this guilt, and the excellence of the unconscious defense against the original trauma, always to be considered oral in nature. Dr. Bergler suggests that the artist makes the mother unnecessary by creating a world of words in place of her milk, that he achieves an autarchic reality in this way for the undisputed possession he has been forced to surrender, and, in short, that any interference with this positive breast fixation results in artistic sterility. I am especially interested in the similarity of substitute complexes offered

by Shakespeare and Kafka against their nuclear trauma in its original form. Both artists conceal the breast complex and offer instead to themselves and to us a symbolic representation of castration-death wounds. In Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis", the symbolic forgiveness of the castrating boar and the placing of the anenome between her breasts by Venus anticipates the final release won by Shakespeare after the so-called dark or tragic period. For Kafka, the indestructible self, in which he claimed to believe, was never anticipated in feeling or symbol, and, like his boy-patient in "A Country Doctor", Kafka chose a genius doomed to death.

"The Venus and Adonis", of 1593, is accepted tolerantly as a period-conditioned display of youthful exuberance in natural beauty and a tediously prolonged wooing by a mature goddess of a reluctant youth. Since this poem is so strikingly different from the form Shakespeare used as a base, he made changes which reveal the tensions and drives in his own personality. Let us assume for the time being that the youth Adonis is Shakespeare himself, and that Venus is Shakespeare's poetic version of his infantile fantasy of his own mother. No, you can't prove anything that way, but we may discover something. In its archetypal form the myth constituted the basis of a classical religion in which millions worked out a catharsis of their early emotional polarizations and achieved at least the communal purgation of personalized guilt. To be fair with our predecessors in the confused art of living, it would seem also that in the resurrection of Adonis, they had the emotional equivalent of the new integration in maturity. The secondary elaborations of the dream are as common to legend or myth as to personal dreams, and as important for the understanding of the psyche as a whole.

In Ovid's version of the myth, Adonis is warned to hunt the rabbit by Venus (to remain a child), but being a noble youth, he rejects the advice of the mother goddess and insists on hunting the boar. Ovid knew the legend of this metamorphosis as the story content of the Magna Mater and her Son-consort. Throughout Western Asia she was invoked as

Astarte, Aphrodite, Cybele, and Venus with slightly varying rites and the predominant symbols of the lions and the phallic cone. Her Son-consort was Tammuz (true son of the deep water), or Adonis, or Attis. He was slain by a boar yearly only to rise again with renewed life and rejoice the hearts of all men, for with his mother-goddess he guaranteed fertility to the earth and to all breathing things. Sacred prostitution, human sacrifice, incarnation in king or in priest, and in the more violent Roman form, of Cybele and Attis, a complete drama of regeneration were all known to Ovid, but he tells the story with the detachment and sentiment of an artist seeking only to please. From the death of Adonis, who may have been slain by Ares in the form of a boar, there came the purple-red Anemone commemorating as wind-blown flower the yearly resurrection of the beautiful youth so beloved by his mother-consort.

The changes wrought by Shakespeare in Ovid's story are remarkable evidence of his complete indifference to its religious value and of a deep-seated neurosis which is to influence all of his later work. Shakespeare appropriates the story only because his infantile fantasies can liberate themselves through a distortion and degradation process indicative of a castration defense against an oral fixation. This much was latent in the original but countermanded by the resurrection. Specifically Shakespeare introduces two horses symbolizing genitalized sex only to have Adonis repudiate their meaning, while Venus defended and invited imitation. For this, Shakespeare's Adonis rebukes his Venus and reads the first of many lectures Shakespeare is to give against shameless lust in woman. This Venus also forgives the boar or castrating father as unintentionally guilty of her beloved's death, and places the flower springing from the mutilated body or its blood between her breasts.

The mating horses introduced represent an upwelling of imagery at once indicative of Shakespeare's inner understanding of the mother-son complex involved. But Shakespeare degrades Venus to an unmannerly, lascivious woman

wooing a young man. This Venus appears much later in Cleopatra, who is alternately the Star of Egypt (as indeed Isis was) and the triple-turned whore. Goddess-woman she is, desired and hated within Shakespeare himself. Yet, as Gertrude was later to forgive unconsciously the Claudius who destroyed the father of Hamlet, so here in "Venus and Adonis", the mother-goddess forgives this castrating father-imago. For the boar obviously as totem animal is the primal father who seeks the life but becomes in time satisfied with the circumcision of the son, a symbolic *pars pro toto*. Here is the archetypal, primal father with whom Shakespeare is to be so much concerned until finally the fantasy is resolved late in life. The forgiveness, novel with this "Venus and Adonis" version, indicates in advance the favorable solution of Shakespeare's infantile dilemma or complex. But for the time present we know that deep in Shakespeare's unconscious a defense in the form of father-hate has concealed the regression of libido to the oral, for the artist projects not his conflict but his defense against it. Pseudo-aggression, therefore, against the father-imago is the prototype already within the unconscious of Adonis-Shakespeare and later is to change the story of Bellforest into the "Hamlet" we know and in which we participate as formerly guilty of the primordial sin.

The degradation of Venus or of Gertrude or Lady Macbeth was a healthy reaction-formation in a growing boy too much enamored at one time of his mother's lovely person. Here projection and reversal permit the retention of the fixation necessary to the life of the artist as Dr. Edmund Bergler knows him from within. But what Dr. Bergler does not emphasize adequately is the return of the repressed within the repressing force. This Venus herself takes the anemone springing miraculously from the soil stained with the blood of her darling and places it commemoratively between her breasts. The final impression of this Venus is antithetical to the aggressive, lustful Venus created by Shakes-

peare in the main action of the poem. This is a remarkable contrast within, even for Elizabethan literature.

"Here was thy father's bed, here in my breast,  
Thou art the next of blood, and 'tis thy right:  
Lo, in this hollow cradle take thy rest;  
My throbbing heart shall rock thee day and night:  
There shall not be one minute in an hour  
Wherein I will not kiss my sweet love's flower."

This is the Venus beloved of old; this is the goddess-mother we all carry in our hearts.

But not without her psychic compensation does she occupy the libido of Shakespeare. She has her necessary complement in the refusing mother-imago, never dissolved by Shakespeare until late in life. He must, therefore, to achieve autarchy, displace his benevolent mother, prove his independence of her, since she has refused him all the love and tenderness he craves, and to prove his independence give us his poetry. All of his work is shadowed by this conflict of images from within; the two mothers never integrate till toward the end of his life.

This real fixation he keeps from his own knowledge. Being a noble youth, not a coward, he hunts the boar instead of the rabbit, as a noble youth should, always protected within from real exposure. Not once in over 240 characters does the real mother he knew emerge as portrait, nor does he ever admit his dependence on woman. In Juliet's Nurse, the verbal equivalents of the classic symbols of Venus indicate considerable licentiousness of spirit, but the principle of self-destruction is within the fatal haste. Through the major tragedies, woman is incrementally destructive in her relations with men; she is a thing to be feared. The dichotomy within Shakespeare is projected without; from real knowledge within, Shakespeare protects himself by refusing to pluck the heart of his own mystery. Had he done so, he would have ceased to write. Religion integrates; art projects a defense.

This is the genius, or condition of genius, which the artist chooses—it is not allotted to him. And the responsibil-

ity is with the chooser. Except by inferential analysis you cannot pluck the heart from Hamlet's mystery, though you may see it here foreshadowed in "Venus and Adonis." Nor can you understand in full any of the tragedies without understanding the progressive disintegration within Shakespeare as he endured the incremental power of his ambivalent distortion within. The artist's balance is always precarious, for elemental sex disrupts the psychic fixation on the mother; and the unreconciled maternal imagos are at war within. Hence, both in the play "Hamlet" and in the poem "Venus and Adonis", we are disturbed by the conflicting affects emergent from the depths of Shakespeare's being. No defense is perfect against the total imperative of being.

The overtones are found in the curious projections and reversals in "Hamlet". Surely the name of every child is "Frailty." The babe hangs at his mother's breast as if increase of appetite had grown by what it fed on; 'tis the mother-goddess who protects her darling's face against the wind. Such a mother even forgives the boar, and takes the child back symbolically to her breast. It was really pseudo-aggression against Claudius and against himself and against the world. As Otto Rank shows in the "Myth of the Birth of the Hero", the pattern is universal. Our forgotten selves are appeased by momentary recognition or recollection in the design for failing successfully.

Thus the family romance of the neurotic within us is realized with splendor and power in Shakespeare's works. His tragedies permit a catharsis because a slightly imperfect hero is overwhelmed by a sequence of events in which the culminating catastrophe is incommensurable with the moral responsibility for the initial act. Surely this is FATE, we say. Hence we are absolved with the hero. But how unsuccessful in solving their problems, how passive these heroes compared with many historical persons meeting a similar obstacle or opposing will. How like terrified children succumbing to the fury of the boar. Impetuous but not determined. Tender but not understanding. Violent but lacking



strength. The luxury of pity we feel for the hero of tragedy is a recognition that we have been—all of us—exposed as children to the fantasy of the primordial father, from the terror of whose image we would indeed retreat to the bosom of the mother. So the artist offers us consolation and absolution. Shakespeare and Kafka protest in almost the same words: it is the will that is puzzled. Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, Lear—even Antony—are all glad to lay the burden down. It is too much for them. Unlike the religious hero or the initiate in the religious mystery, there is no voice which says, "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness." And this pseudo-aggression, this inability to prevail, this somewhat spiteful repudiation of reality is all due, says Dr. Bergler, to the necessary inward frustration of the artist and his projection of his defense against a carefully concealed inner oralism. Often a superficial layer or secondary fixation is revealed, but the original oralism of the artist is never confronted by the successful artist. Only the return of the repressed is there, even in spite of the projection of the defense, in typical situations, curious compromises, distortions and secondary elaborations, and the strange alterations that the artist makes by unconscious changes in his objective fact or source material.

The alternating gentleness and violence so amazing in the plays reflect the undisciplined flow of affect never directed beyond a personal narcissism called honor. That is why we recognize ourselves so easily in Shakespeare; he is one with us; he spoke for us. We consider him our philosopher, for he moralizes generously about the folly of man, the brevity of life, the undiscovered country, and even persuades us that:

"We are such stuff

As dreams (or fantasies) are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep."

Not the kind of sleep that made the dreaming Hamlet fear death, but the kind he knew as a babe at his mother's breast, the innocent sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of the

world's care. Or the sleep that comes to those who have been reborn of the flower at the breast of Venus.

We never quite forget, of course, that a man should love and take a younger than himself, that he should not be elemental before marriage, that wounds hurt before they heal. Still, the Kingdom of words, words, words, must be paid for, since the only alternative is silence.

11.

It is only natural that Franz Kafka should have been mistaken for a mature philosopher instead of the repudiating, autarchic child he is. As significantly as the mother in the parable of the Prodigal Son is absent, so in these magnificent works of Kafka the mother is safely protected from the knowledge of the son, and only the father as castrating imago, accusing the bewildered boy of a guilt he cannot discover, summoning him to a mission he cannot complete, exacting a penalty written into his very flesh, even kicking him as he introjects his primordial hate for the father and metamorphoses into a bug, emerges to warn modern man that his is the eternal fate. As bewildered as Kafka was himself by his refusal to accept objective reality, to find the solution and free himself from guilt as man, his critics speak unctuously of the incommensurables of divine and human justice, parade their dialectic, and share the unconscious crime of Kafka in the eternal war of Prometheus with the Gods, or the unconscious with the conscious, or the particular with the universal. We can excuse the artist, for his refusal to know himself; his projection of his unconscious defense is a necessary condition of his art. But must a critic be equally unknowing to be able to read aright the poet's dream?

Need we explain in a Neo-Freudian age the symbolism the ancients knew so well? Have we so far shattered the continuity of the unconscious and the conscious that even as critics we cannot see? Is it not enough that the artist project his defense against the original fixation? If we redream the poet's dream, let us as critics understand it also. The fear and trembling, the sense of unspecified guilt, the

search for the father whom we have decomposed or repudiated, the repeated symbolic castration-death are all evidences of the fixation on a pre-phallic libido level. The mother does return diffused in her own symbolic moonlight penetrating that room where the boy lies on his lonely couch, surrounded by fantasy family constellation, and visited in the night by a doctor who is not priest, though the magic of the infantile unconscious unclothes him and forces him to lie beside the wounded boy while children chant a sort-of-devil's charm. Must we then talk about absolutes and levels of meaning when Kafka shows us the child wounded by the boar or the ax, and awakens in us a terror and pity like that of the Greek tragedians for the inadequacy of the human will in the presence of a necessitous universe of being? Kafka never secured the personal catharsis necessary for religious faith. How then can we speak of God or mystery? He has depersonalized himself immensely—but the stuff of the infantile fixation and its results are there, as it is in Shakespeare.

Precious indeed was the ancient wrong done to Kafka, the passive recipient of Fate. It permitted him to replace the mother. He refused with peculiar artist-saving instinct the possibility of therapy through psychoanalysis because he wanted to write. In suicide fantasy, pseudo-aggression against the father introjected against himself, Kafka conceals with a pretended wound the real fixation. It is not good to know the meaning of horses, to permit assistants to assist, to probe too deeply into the chasms of the soul. In "A Country Doctor" the doctor who has lost his one horse has no idea where these two horses came from, though he later recognizes one of them as his own.

Like "The Penal Colony" and "The Burrow", in fact like all of his stories, "A Country Doctor" is concerned with an examination of the content and dynamics of the psyche. He never found the resurrected self of the mystery or the religious adept, but he claims, at any rate, to have been seeking always the indestructible in himself. There are so many critics taking Kafka as prophet, as the begin-

ning or end of something, that we need detachment to experience the story he actually tells and interpret its symbolism. Here pseudo-aggression against the self results in a persistent and amazing failure to understand anything at all. That is what makes the story splendid, if you remember that it is a story. But the doctor wanted to see without understanding, for he must justify his failure—be completely undone by a hostile world and unreasonable expectations for self-cure.

The doctor from the country answers the night bell to find that his one horse has gone he knows not where, and then with the magic of the dream into which he has entered, a servant girl whom he notices erotically for the first time, and an elemental groom or servant (finely representative of the total unconscious), provide him with two splendid horses—from nowhere—right out of a pigsty adjacent to his own house, or conscious ego. Elemental sex is here as in the two horses of Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis". It is all as funny as a dream, and as Freud would say, as meaningful; goth what we are permitted to see and what the dream condenses and distorts. For the defense, as Dr. Bergler would say, against the original fixation is here in perfect form. Venus as diffused moonlight breaks through the open window into a room heated by a smoky stove. Sex is jammed as forward drive, and the family constellation is infantile. The Schoolmaster appropriately leads the attendant children in singing this charming ditty of revenge against the father:

"Strip his clothes off, then he'll heal us,  
If he doesn't, Kill him dead!  
Only a doctor, only a doctor!

With the perplexity of the cross-currents and double-exposures of a dream, the doctor, who is only dreaming and visiting in his dream the child within himself, can't get his mind off Rose, the servant girl noticed erotically for the first time as the two horses or assistants were offered him by the elemental groom from nowhere, or the unconscious. As he regressed to look voyeuristically at his former wound, the

doctor just knew that the groom had smashed the door in and gone right after Rose, who would now be hopelessly lost to him forever, just as Kafka wanted to lose every woman up until the year he died. At first the doctor from the country (or conscious) thought the boy was malingering. The sick boy whispers poignantly to the doctor to let him die. But those unearthly, elemental horses, assistants from heaven itself, look in knowingly and whinny. But they can't speak the language of the rational mind with which alone the doctor is familiar. It's all hopeless anyway. Nothing can be done. A very common case. Two strokes of an ax in the forest—and here is the boy—without the hope of resurrection in the myth of Adonis-Venus. Just look at this wound yourself:

"Rose-red, in many variations of shade, dark in hollows, lighter at edges, softly granulated, with irregular clots of blood, open as a surface mine to the daylight. That is how it looked at a distance. But on closer inspection there was another complication. I could not help a low whistle of surprise. Worms, as thick and long as my little finger, themselves rose-red and blood-spotted as well, were wriggling from their fastnesses in the interior of the wound towards the light, with small white heads and many little legs. Poor boy, you were past helping. I had discovered your great wound; this blossom in your side was destroying you."

This is the most perfect castration wound in literature. Now the boy whispers once more to the doctor, this time with a sob, as he was quite blinded by the life he saw in the wound: "Will you save me?" But no, the boy's case is hopeless. The genius lives by virtue of the wound; it is his salvation as artist even though it destroys him as man. He is Prometheus chained to the rock of his own torture. He creates because he suffers humiliation as man. A victim of premature senility, the defeated doctor accepts castration by the father even as Adonis did from the tusks of the boar (or Ares disguised as boar). But the doctor's is a living death, not a life after death:

"Naked, exposed to the frost of this most unhappy of

ages, with an earthly vehicle, unearthly horses, old man that I am, I wander astray. My fur coat is hanging from the back of the gig, but I cannot reach it, and none of my limber pack of patients lifts a finger. Betrayed! Betrayed! A false alarm on the night bell once answered—it cannot be made good, not ever.”

So, Kafka is undone—at least he thinks or claims to think—by the castrating father—and a life-long accusation of a father who robbed him of his manhood ensues. His whole work, says Kafka, was but an effort to escape from his father. And, in one sense, of course, it was true. But only as a necessary defense against the more primal breast complex whose symptoms he never permitted to emerge past his vigilant self-concealment. No wonder he couldn't find God. He never wanted to find himself. Let us cease to regard his life or work as a valid indictment of the universe, since he chose to defend the virtue of his original fixation by a defense apparently moral. Yet even with Kafka, at the end of his life, the ineradicable tendency to sanity or wholeness breaks through for a while, and he wonders with carefully restrained self-knowledge, if he hasn't made a profound spiritual blunder in preferring the superficial and insignificant to the discovery of the pearl of great price. But even at the end he prefers to burrow for himself and for us in his self-imposed, insoluble conflict—the wound which suppurates worms the size of your little finger. Like his own little, wounded boy, he too wishes to live after having so long willed to die. He may have chosen well as an artist to conceal a great grief with a great hatred of his father. And curiously enough, we do pity the hero projection of himself, just as he wanted us to do. That symbolic flower springing from the soil whereon Adonis lay may have been a recognition that even though the artist return to the femininity of the mother and of his own unconscious for its creative fertility, he still lives as man spiritually in the poetry and splendor of his dream.

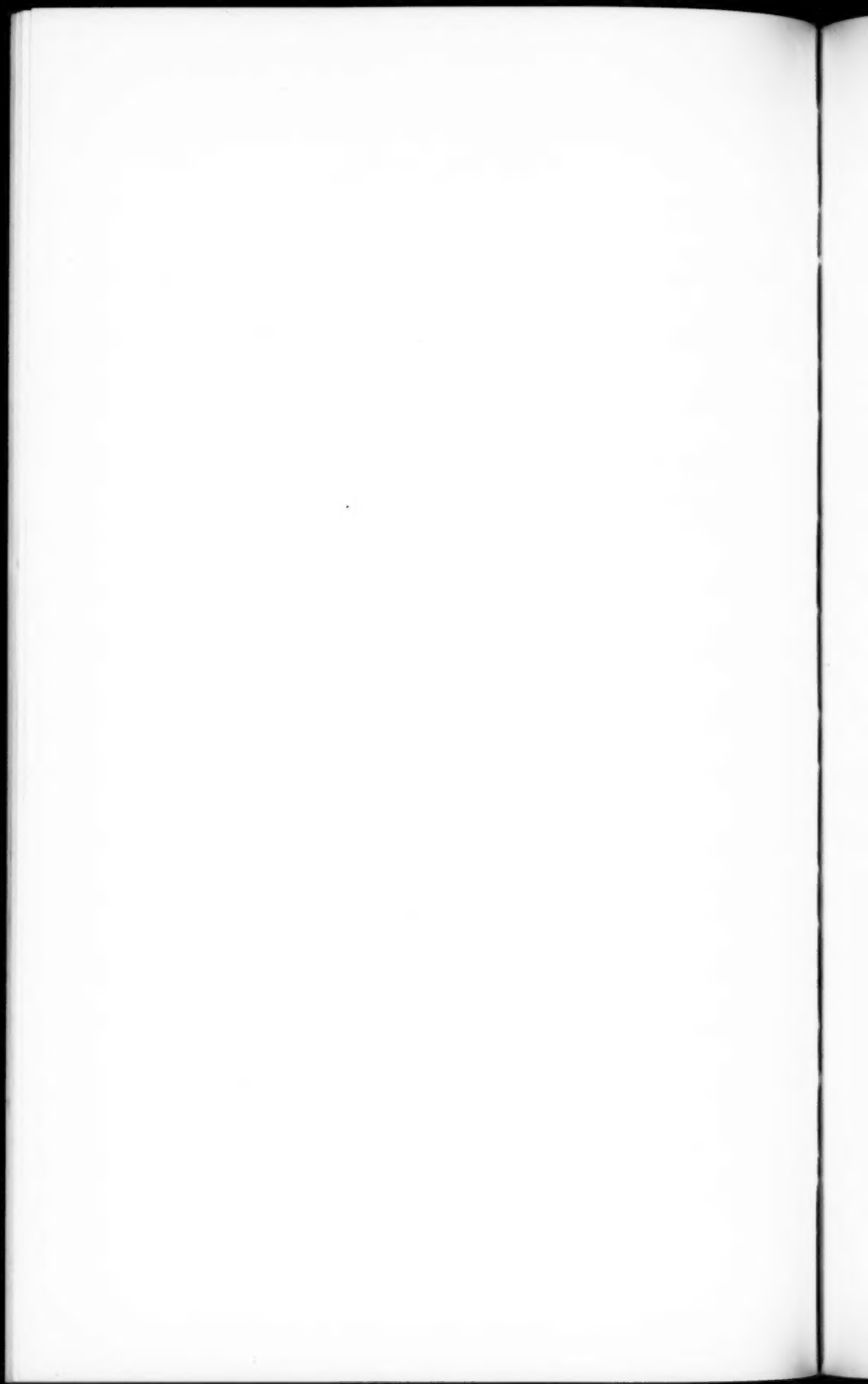
Though neither Shakespeare nor Kafka is a prophet.

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though neither artist is a philosopher, each is the cause that we think with richer materials in a world far more alive because they preferred their dreams to objective reality. Let the critic, therefore, redream the poet's dream, but let him analyze it not as his own fantasy wills, but as the artist creates—a polyphonic composition or fugue.

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## PLEASANT DREAMS\*

by

Nathan Rapport

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It does not seem possible. At one moment a man's entire being is absorbed in his narrow escape from death, in a terrific struggle against the most fearful odds; but the next moment he has completely forgotten the incident and can never recall it again! Another speaks rapturously of a scene before him as the vision of beauty excelling all that was ever viewed; the next moment it is as something that never entered his mind—he has forgotten it forever! Man displays a routine forgetfulness which is a powerful factor limiting our scant and scattered knowledge of dreams.

Freud's deciphering of a great mass of symbolism, though obscured by his wish-fulfillment and dream-censor theories, is the only considerable later contribution to a body of knowledge recorded 23 centuries ago by Aristotle. That ancient "secretary of nature" left for us the origins of our theories about subconscious thought, subliminal impressions and telepathy.

Approximately 98 per cent of remembered dreams are pictorial equivalents, generally symbolic, of memories, wishes, fears, hopes, intentions and random suppositions such as we entertain while awake. A few are of the kind we then repress. A very small proportion of these dreams cannot be properly classified as equivalents of memories; although they are revived impressions of the dreamer's past, they are beyond recall by the wakeful mind's own efforts. These include symbolisms of the conception and the birth of the dreamer.

The stimulus for a dream equivalent of thought often is some sensation from the body or surroundings, vaguely appreciated during the partial sleep attending awakening or nocturnal interruptions. Ann Radcliffe, who with *The Mysteries of Udolpho* earned a chapter in the history of the

English novel, is said to have contrived many interruptions of her sleep by eating indigestible food. During the resulting disturbances, allegedly caused by a protesting stomach, the novelist gathered much vivid dream material for her weird stories. Dryden consumed raw meat to encourage his awareness of nocturnal fantasies.

About 2 per cent of remembered dreams suggest inherited impressions, telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition—phenomena which, despite a wealth of evidence, remain beyond understanding. Such dreams occur during deep sleep. They are made available for recollection only when their weak emotional components, by leading to awakening, establish links between dream and environment. Probably, were we able to recall all our dreams, this kind would outnumber the equivalents of wakeful thoughts.

Why is it that within the borders of Dreamland we accept as matter-of-fact realities the images which wakeful recollection discloses as mysterious, absurd or impossible? In *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann* the poet's friend and literary assistant, Johann Peter Eckermann, reported a most interesting dream of his own. He pictured himself as one of a small group stranded on a rock far from the sea-coast. Believing he was the least comely of the group, he felt averse to swimming to shore. But after a convenient exchange took place, he found himself occupying the body of a handsome young companion, the original owner of that splendid physique having moved into Eckermann's old body. By actively swimming to shore, the young new tenant imparted to that form a youthful shapeliness. This dream was the equivalent of the ordinary thought which may be worded as, "Oh, if I only had a more shapely form! A youthful spirit would endow this bag of old bones with the comeliness of vigor."

The normal individual consists of two distinct personalities—one dreams, the other faces environment. Each of these two has its own individual character and memory. The wakeful personality, by habitual rationalization and self-

ensorship has become detached from the self of which the remaining greater part continues in subconscious activities. The dreaming personality readily accepts as matters of fact its impressions which defy physical, moral and rational restrictions, because it never had, and never can have, informative, perfect contact with reality's rules. The psychotic individual, though awake, responds to reality with the mentality of the normal person dreaming. While dreaming, all—sane or deranged—ignore reality; then all possess equal sanity. Here is no question of intelligence; a patient may score an I. Q. higher than that of the psychologist or doctor examining him.

Usually a dreamer does not wonder at his ability to levitate his body up to the ceiling, to fly everywhere without wings, to walk the fluid surface of a river with carefully weightless step, or to pass from his apartment directly into an exotic, foreign scene deep in the past. Since childhood the dreaming personality has always wielded these powers and cannot marvel at the very familiar scenes. It is left to the associated personality, the wakeful one, to comment upon infrequent recollection, "What a crazy dream!" "Such depths of mystery!" or "How lovely!"

Upon retiring to bed we usually review recent events and then turn to random thoughts while consciousness of self becomes gradually more vague. Then follows drowsiness which later memory incorrectly identifies as mental nothingness. Awakening comes after a few hours when, by force of habit, renewed interest once again broadens the sensory field. The entire interval is veiled by the normal amnesia covering sleep; at most only a dream or two is recalled. For there has not been sufficient linkage with environment to make the mental activity available to wakeful recollection.

One night my young son cried out several times in his sleep, and seemed to be struggling. I imagined that he was meeting severe reverses while fighting the allied Indians, pirates and Martians. There were indications that the bloody massacre might become a serious state of affairs. Certain

that he had lost at least one scalp, I rushed to the rescue by waking him. In response to my question, "What were you dreaming about?" an expression of puzzlement was added to the calm with which he said, "Nothing at all! I wasn't dreaming at all." I told him that only a moment before he had seemed to be in pain and was almost choking with the effort to cry out. The boy was surprised and remarked that it seemed to him that he had been having the most peaceful sleep!

The mystery and adventure that parade through any mind in one night would fill many volumes. Although (or perhaps because) during a dream we concentrate our entire attention upon it, we forget it as soon as it is over. The self then exists merely as an imaginary spectator of, or participant in, the action which seems so real. The wakeful personality being asleep at the time, no decision relative to reality is possible. We cannot determine, "I will remember this dream." How then are we to enable the wakeful mind to peep into Dreamland?

There is no royal road to that purpose. Drugs may accomplish it, but at too terrifying a cost. Burdening the stomach unwisely with midnight snacks, encourages sleep interruptions during which we may recall dreams influenced by that organ's protests. Circumstances which, through lack of scientific investigation, remain favors of chance, sometimes grant the waking mind an actual on-the-scene view of the dream. But there is only one worth while method and that is the cultivation of interest in mental pictures, intense enough to persist while they occupy the mind.

How does it happen that dream images can be more enchanting than any picture in an art gallery? A dream may be dull indeed when—although a complete hallucination—it seems to present matter-of-fact reality. But when we know that we are dreaming, there is ecstasy! For then, all that exists besides the dreamer is his dream, without a dulling film of reality before it; the color is the purest, the esthetic enjoyment of form exceeds that of the essence of

music. The magic inherent in fantasies of the night is enjoyed only during activation of the wakeful personality (the group of impressions that supports judgment and includes those referring to present personal identity) while its customary associate, the sensory system, remains comparatively idle. A friend is enthusiastic about his enchantment when he is aware of having a certain recurrent dream in which he pictures himself cutting out paper dolls. To his delighted amazement, they begin to act like flesh-and-blood people! Conscious that he is viewing mere mental images, the dreamer examines them, but cannot find any representation of the medium for this miracle—life in a paper doll!

In order to be aware of the fact that we are dreaming, we must be conscious of three things: the self, the dream and the relationship between them. We can be made conscious of this relationship only by the sensory system—the means for knowing location of details in space and time. In addition to consciousness of self and the dream, there is essential an awareness, no matter how vague, of environment (of which the body is the most immediate) to fully enjoy the wonders in dreams. As awareness of environment is impossible during deep sleep, our dreams then are apt to roam all space and time as if personal identity is merged in a universal consciousness. All personal problems, even the deepest or most painful, are then ignored.

The nature of dreams may be studied best on those rare occasions when one is aware that he is dreaming. One night I awoke in raptures of delight inspired by a dream which pictured a drawing room of the Victorian period. Brilliant lights flashed, and a myriad of sparkles twinkled from a magnificent cut-glass chandelier. Interesting as any stage extravaganza were the many quaintly detailed figurines upon a mantel against the distant, paneled wall adorned in rococo. At the right a merry group of beauties and gallants in the most elegant attire of Victorian England idled away a pleasant occasion. This scene continued for a period of which I was not aware, before I discovered that it was not reality,

but a mental picture and that I was viewing it. Instantly it became an incommunicably beautiful vision. It was with the greatest stealth that my vaguely awakened mind began to peep; for I knew that these glorious shows end abruptly because of such intrusions.

I thought, "Have I here one of those mind pictures that are without motion?" As if in reply one of the young ladies gracefully waltzed about the room. She returned to the group and immobility, with a smile lighting her pretty face which turned over her shoulder toward me. The entire color scheme was unobtrusive despite the kaleidoscopic sparkles of the chandelier, the exquisite blues and creamy pinks of the rich settings and costumes. I felt that only my interest in dreams brought my notice to the tints—delicate, yet all alive as if with inner illumination.

The scene occupied the mind's entire "visual field." It was with a feeling of much eye-strain (whether imaginary or real, I could not discover because of my caution against complete awakening) that I focused my attention in all directions, one after another, to the utmost limits of the field and found them vague and irregularly hazy. So the scene differed from many dream pictures which occupy the central area of a dark background—a central area also limited by similar irregular haziness.

As the dream continued, I pictured myself extolling the magical beauty of this inner vision to four friends. I asked that one of them place his open hand a few inches in front of my closed eyes. I then informed them that I could still see the picture—now seemingly projected against the hand—as if my eyelids were transparent. This dream episode was the equivalent of my thought, "These four friends should be able to lend a hand in my investigations." This referred to friends whom I had asked to undertake experimental exploration of Dreamland, merely by forming for about a half hour a simple habit. While in bed awaiting sleep, the experimenter interrupts his thoughts every few minutes with an



effort to recall the mental item vanishing before each intrusion by that inquisitive attention.

Such introspection may easily be made habitual enough to invade the drowsy outskirts of Dreamland, and, upon sudden awakening there, find a startling revelation. One of my friends was amazed at finding himself strolling past the bazaars in Cairo, despite environmental assurances, before and after that magic moment, that he was actually in that most Occidental locality of all places—Brooklyn! When, upon the threshold of sleep, consciousness of self intrudes upon your thoughts, they are found weirdly absorbed—unguided while they picture, recite or hear the often commonplace residue of recent experience, but more often adventure, mystery or beauty you never knew in wakeful life. Shouts, and whispers too, echo through the winding halls of the mind; diverse scenes flash or linger upon that limitless stage.

When introspection interrupts the imminent surrender of interest in environment, which includes the physical self, you become aware of the effect responsible for the phrase, "falling asleep." Arrested is your imagined fall from a high cliff, a tall building, or in an elevator hurtling down. Attention to the approaching abandonment of consciousness of environment, as in surrender to sleep, promotes the illusion of an actual fall.

Let those who easily forget, belie their ready clichés "Lovely as a dream!" and "Beyond my wildest dreams!" by referring to the nocturnal images as dull inanities. The reader and I know better. The ordinary mental theater such as mine is exceeded in every respect by the dreams of others; but my own dreams may do as instances. Once I closed my eyes for a drowsy moment so brief that my companion did not notice the pause in my answer to a question. Upon the darkness within my closed eyes appeared a pinpoint of light which, despite the briefness of the entire vision, seemed to expand gradually into a full scene of an Aztec city, colorful and ablaze with sunlight. The expanding scene soon filled the entire visual field, which thenceforth was occupied, due

to an advancing focus, successively by an ever-reduced number of buildings, by the humblest one of them, by its door and finally by the vast expansion of a single spot of that door, fading into nothingness like an excessively enlarged view in a microscope.

Often in dreams I've knelt on the floor in my house, the better to observe a tribe of tiny people not larger than bees, while they toiled or played; and I've picked my way through a forest of gigantic legs, while I gazed up in wonder at the faces of the gawky giants. Stifling in darkness, I've exulted with companion Greek soldiers within the huge wooden horse, chuckling in anticipation of the Trojans' dismay over the gift. I've committed crimes of which it is not proper to speak; I've felt excessive embarrassment over the strange, suddenly noticed absence of my coat, or hat and been startled by its sudden, unexplained reappearance upon me; I've trembled in apprehension as, ragged and covered with filth and vermin, I cautiously groped my way in escape from the depths of a dark, medieval French dungeon; lolled luxuriously in a fabulous Persian palace and strolled through the most weirdly beautiful gardens in which were displayed unknown varieties of exotic plants. In dreams I've hurtled for ages past strange worlds which silently revolved in indescribable vastness; understood the thoughts of every kind of creature; been threatened by grimacing dogs and grinning horses; fled with brethren ants into our tunnel to escape attacks by those monsters—the worms, whose burrowings caused alarming undulations in the earth around us.

In other dreams I've gazed in enchanted wonder at many marvelous pictures fashioned in variously colored light against the sky, with advertising legends that detracted not a jot from the strange thrill; reveled in the beauty of a silent woodland glade, familiar as if for the thousandth time visited, yet entirely unknown to me while awake; browsed at leisure through a library of books, marvelously illustrated by pictures printed to respond to the gaze with lifelike action; walked hand in hand with a woman of loveliness sel-

dom encountered in this world, enjoying a sentimental tenderness beyond mortal reach; conversed with people long departed from our world and I was often positive—yes, positive within the dream's illusion of reality, that I had found the basic secret that explains life. Almost all of the dreams listed were probably equivalents of wakeful thoughts, but interpretation is not the present theme.

Robert Louis Stevenson, while seriously disclaiming creative responsibility for those of his wonderful tales which originated in his dreams, humorously proffered the credit to "the Little People" or "my Brownies" who arranged his nightly mental theater. Psychoanalysts may enjoy elementary practice in dream interpretation with Stevenson's *The Suicide Club*. None of us can tell our stories as thrillingly as Stevenson, but even the least gifted will find subjects as absorbing as *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* staged by his own "Little People."

The absence of control by a dreamer over the production of the material within his view, is well illustrated in the following instance. Robert G. Ingersoll related one of his dreams, in which he seemed to be discussing some particular theme with another man. Becoming aware that he was merely dreaming, he thought that he ought to be able to predetermine the entire dialogue. Experimenting, as the dream continued, he asked his fantasied opponent a question, after having made up his own mind what the answer would be. When a totally unexpected reply came, the dreamer was so astonished that he awoke.

Despite the characteristic absence of even the least effort in the production of dreams, they have always been noted as sources of much value to inventors, mathematicians, poets, novelists and philosophers. Sir Thomas Browne, a physician who achieved much literary fame with his *Religio Medici*, remarked that if memory of dreams were faithful as the reasoning in them is fruitful, he would study only while dreaming.

In dreams a man may display a personality, either

temporary or permanent, altogether contrary to his wakeful self. Mrs. "George" one morning demanded an explanation from her husband. During the night he had suddenly sat bolt upright in bed, and with expressive gestures, sung, "On a bench, in a park, in Paree—," continuing until his awakened wife and daughter succeeded in quieting him. A pleasant dream, no doubt! In the morning he failed to remember it. His surprise at his conduct as reported to him could be readily understood by all who knew Mr. "George"—a severe philosopher beyond whose desire flitted even the most moderate frivolity. He could not understand his nocturnal ability to continue beyond the opening line of the song, for he had never paid direct attention to the popular ditty. Mr. "George" sincerely assured me that there was not amongst his hidden desires anything remotely tinged with the spirit of "*o la! la!*"

As to the mysterious glories all too seldom remembered from dreams—why attempt to describe them? Those magical fantasies, the weird but lovely gardens, these luminous grandeurs; they are enjoyed only by the dreamer who observes them with active interest, peeping with appreciative wakeful mind, grateful for glories surpassing those the most accomplished talents can devise in reality. The fascinating beauty found in dreams amply rewards their study. But there is a higher call. The study and cure of the mind out of touch with reality can be aided by attention to dreams. And when secrets are wrested from the mystery of life, many of them will have been discovered in pleasant dreams.

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# THE SYMBOLISM OF SUBINCISION

Gésa Róheim

In my book on *The Eternal Ones of the Dream*, Chapter VIII is on the ritual of Ngallunga. This ritual usually belongs to the kangaroo totem and consists in the older men (the initiators) running backwards and showing their subincision hole. The blood spurts forth from the subincision hole and the youngsters see the great mystery of initiation. It is quite clear that the aim of the rite is to *separate* the young men from the group of the mothers and to *aggregate* them to the group of the fathers. It is clear what is meant when they call the subincision hole a "vagina" or a "penis womb". The whole subincised penis may be called a vagina in the sacred songs. The name of the ritual *ngallunga* was translated to me into Aranda as *tjoananga*, i.e., "we two are friends" — By *we two* the ritual evidently means son and father. They are offering an artificial vagina as compensation for the real one, i.e., the maternal vagina.

The ritual itself consists in running backwards and flicking the penis up so that the subincision wound should be visible to the boy. Moreover I have also suggested that the creek in which they run backwards (1) symbolizes the vagina.

The mythical song of the Pitjantara that goes with the subincision rite begins with the following lines:

Karunka	tjiri	wanka
From the creek	tj! tj!	it sings
Lalanpa	palintjiri	
Appearing	together	
	(means the	
	boys)	
Walka	kulpangura	
Blood	running down	

When they actually subincise the penis:

Tjitji	ngura	kuntana	kuntana
Pipe	crack	cut it	cut it

The "crack" is "where the water comes", the urethra. From a crack to a creek it is not a far step and the ngallunga is running backwards in a creek.

The ritual is also called karu-karuril (i.e., creek creek).

If I examine some of my unpublished texts I find that in the love magic incantations (ilpindja) there is a close connection between the sexual excitement and menstruation.

In one of these incantations given by a Pitjantara called Nyeingu tjilpi, the words for *cunus* and for *creek* are used interchangeably.

Further instances of this ambisexual symbolism are collected here partly from my own field notes, partly published by others. (2)

The following is from a song that accompanies the Warpmala (war, blood-feud) of the Pitjantara and neighboring tribes. The whole war song belongs properly to the snake totem.

There were snake ancestors at Uluru (on the border of Mularatara and Matuntara country). They came to Tutara (with lime tree) and camped there. Then they went south west to Tjenintara (with the Tjenin-bush). There is a big water-hole there where they camped. They passed a place called Nyimiri (ribs) where they flew up into the sky. They killed some poison snakes and flew back to Uluru. They sent a messenger to Iltjintara (Beef wood scrub) to fetch some more *kunia snakes*. We leave out many other details of the song and ritual which also includes the multiplying of snakes. The ritual itself as far as it was shown to us consisted of the man walking round a spear making coitus movements. But contrary to expectations the spear was in the passive position. Then they played at dodging spears thrown at them by others. The part of the song we have to quote is this:

Jala	tampana
Starting	we
Wumo	wumuno
gather	we gather
Tatalkinu	jalata

We run	starting
Kulaina (3)	wumuwumunu
Spear	gather together
Kitipuruntjuno	
Charcoal on breast (4)	
Maiumbana (5)	katintjirkali
Snake's body	snake's stomach
Pilurumpana	wumpatangara (6)
Snake's skin	keep still, stand up.
Minmangari	tjuraja (7)
Crooked	lay it
Kalu	palapalunja
Penis	that that
Tarataraltultaja	
Mouth hanging down (8)	
Mimingari	tjuraja
Lay it	crooked
Mingari	wirampungu
Penis	pours out
Mingari	wirampungu
Penis	pours out
Wirampungu	
Pours out	
Tjitatu	tjitatu
Tj bird	tj bird
Wajangurpangurpa	
Many spreading	
Ngalanglanyina	
Sitting opposite	
Witjulkutjulku	
Witjulku bird	
Ngalanglanyina	
Sitting opposite	
Witjulkutjulku	
Witjulkubirds	
Ngalanka	
Their foreheads	



Kunka	waralu
Woman	long
Kunkujiri	kunka
Flying about	woman
Waralu	jipingatalu
Long	milk round breast
Tj! tj!	kurpinu
Noise (sound tj!)	splash it
Tjintiri	tjintiri
Willy wagtail	wagtail
Katjinirurua	
Spear shaking	
Kuruwarkutu	nyina
Eye mark	is

*The blood squirting from the penis is called woman, (kunka) or ipi (milk). The willy wagtail is brought in at the end because if you throw a stone at it, it simply flies away — so it will be easy for them to evade enemy spears. They press the spears down and make them tight before starting. The eye mark refers again to the willy-wagtail, as it has round wide eyes.*

The coitus movements around the spear and the squirting forth of blood are done secretly; women should not see them.

In this war-like ceremony, why are the men pretending that the penis is a vagina, that blood is milk and so on?

Evidently to camouflage their hostile intentions, and this I would assume applies also to the initiation situation.

A thorough reading of all my unpublished texts would probably bring more data of this kind. In the emu myth of Uturu-tati (Merino group of Luritja) I find the following lines:

Kapanypana	ngaralyi	ngaralyi
Subincision	stand up	stand up
Kuna kapanypana		
Vagina incision		

and the explanation given by Wapiti and Mulda instead of

saying kalu kapanypana (penis incision) they say kuna kapanypana (vagina incision) in the song.

I have published a few data supporting this view in *Psychoanalysis of Primitive Cultural Types*, *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, XIII. 72. In the foreword of those papers I make acknowledgements to Dr. K. Menninger and others. Maybe if Weston la Barre had known that Dr. K. Menninger is partly responsible for this point of view everything would have been all right. Further data to confirm this view were mentioned in *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, 123, and in *The Eternal Ones of the Dream*, 1945 164. 165. In each of these cases it has been clearly stated that I am not interpreting anything, this is simply what the sacred songs of the natives say. Weston la Barre, however, writes:

"When R  heim states that the purpose of subincision in Central Australia was to weaken sexual differences by simulating a vagina, menses, etc., even a reviewer (Wissler in JoF. 59. 1946, 338) with a psychological background, with the rest of us wonders whether this is the meaning the native shows, *even unconsciously* (my italics) in the material he brings or whether this is R  heim's culturally subjective extrapolation." (9)

Some people prefer to wonder than to read the text, and nobody can prevent them from doing so. But a reviewer is an exception, one would think he has read what he is reviewing.

However let us see what other workers, not under the anathema of being Freudians have found in Australia. Berndt and Berndt in reviewing my book write: (10) "Among the Mudhhera, Goerindzi and Nyinin the incisure may at times be termed a vulva." "But it is possible that when the bulk of the textual material for certain parts of the Northern Territory has been examined and analyzed such an interpretation may be made. Tentatively it may be added that such in incisure is probably associated closely with the Old Woman Cult and is symbolic of her uterus." "Some native informants do hold that the blood shed on the piercing of the

penis incisure is symbolic of the blood shed by the Old Woman when she was killed at the beginning." (11)

While in Central Australia I was told that for an uninitiate to see, curse, or touch the subincision opening was a grave matter. It is especially the women, against whom the men are always demonstrating their maleness,—who may not see the subincision wound.

Berndt and Berndt in their latest report have very interesting things to say about the subincision rite.

The novice's guardian says to him:

"Look! you must have your penis cut later in the same way — that is the cut will save your life, the life of your wife and the life of your friend, it is the paying with a life." (12)

A man of a certain group killed a man of another group by magic.

The accusing party would sit outside the main camp. Then one man from the party where the accused was got up and stated that he was willing to offer himself for the accused person. The two headmen would then touch his subincised penis. All then touched his penis except the accused man. This was giving his life for his friend. If a girl were accused the equivalent of this right would be that she would have intercourse with all the accusers. Or a husband might offer his wife in the same situation.

The equivalence of the touching of the subincision wound in men and submitting to coitus in women makes matters quite clear.

However, maybe not. Perhaps this is another instance of those poor unsophisticated Freudians and their "gay nineties" ideas.

Five years after I had put this hypothesis forth Ashley Montagu, I am sure quite independently of what I had written arrived at the same conclusion.

Subincisions in the male was originally instituted to cause the male to resemble the female (etc.) (13)

He bases his theory on Hogbin who writes about Wogeo

(Wogeo and Australia, how terribly unsophisticated when each island must have an unconscious of its own!) Hogbin describes how men incise their penises periodically and the process is called "men's menstruation." (14)

Interesting data on the subject are given by the veteran Australian anthropologist W. E. Roth. (15)

We can leave out all he has to offer by way of an explanation, quoting only that in the Pitta Pitta and Boulia dialects the term used to describe a subincised penis denotes etymologically "The one with a vulva" or slit. (16)

I am not quite certain whether facts count for anything in this discussion; however: *feci quod potui*.

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#### FOOTNOTES

- (1) What is meant is the dry sandy bed of a creek.
- (2) Cf. G. R  heim, *The Eternal Ones of the Dream*. 1945. 155-199.
- (3) Kulata is Pitjantara and Mularatara for spear.
- (4) That is they put the war paint on.
- (5) When they sing this they make the spear, it will go straight like a snake.
- (6) At this line they all rise without a word and then all rise drawing a deep breath a, a, and then knock the standing spear with the spear throwers.
- (7) Meaning the penis, in order to get more blood out of it.
- (8) The two sides of the subincision wound are two ears, the wound itself a mouth.
- (9) Weston la Barre, *Folklore and Psychology*, *Journal of American Folklore*, 1948. 387, 388.
- (10) These writers have also misunderstood me and regarded as a hypothesis what was a simple statement of fact on basis of my own data.
- (11) R. and C. Berndt, *The Eternal Ones of the Dream*, *Oceania*, XVII, 76.
- (12) Berndt and Berndt, *An initiation Ceremony at Macumba*, *Oceania*, XV, 1945, 263-266.
- (13) M. F. Ashley Montagu, *Coming Into Being among the Australian*

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**Aborigines.** Routledge, London, 1937. 307. Idem, The Origin of Sub-incision in Australia *Oceania* VIII. 1937. 194-207.

(14) L. Hogbin, Native Culture of Wogeo, *Oceania*, V, 330

(15) Quoted by Ashley Montagu

(16) Walter E. Roth, *Ethnological Studies among the North West Central Queensland Aborigines*. Brisbane Government Types, 1897, 180.

## THE ROLE OF THE SERPENT IN MENTAL DEVELOPMENT\*

\*This paper was read before the Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Society on May 12, 1949)

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Throughout the history of mankind the serpent has played a consistent but variable role. In every land it has appeared in some important aspect of cultural life and at one time or another has been worshiped either as a friendly, wise, prophetic soul receptacle or as an evil spirit. Of all early religious practices that of serpent worship is the most universal. The universality of this relationship between man and the serpent, once openly expressed in religious belief but which now in cultured mankind finds only symbolic expression in religious and artistic productions and the sensuous images of dreams and hallucinations, is the subject of this paper.

It would seem almost as if this relationship had acquired a place among those characteristics that are passed on to successive generations as part of their heritage (1) (Freud — *The Ego and the Id*, London, The Hogarth Press 1927, p. 52). Although this might be true to some degree, the task still remains to account not only for the origin of this curious relationship but also for the enormous quantity of energy with which it is so often cathected.

Since man's attitude toward the serpent is predominantly irrational and is shown most vividly in those conditions in which his ego has been seriously impaired we are led at once to a consideration of his relationship to reality in general at a time prior to a definite demarcation between the ego, the id and the outside world.

The first sensory impressions that impinge upon the periphery of the id, transforming it into the ego, arise both internally and externally. The ego is formed out of a multitude of perceptions having to do with bodily shape,

position, motion, organs and their function. These perceptual elements heavily cathected endow the earliest object relationships with their own quality so that a connection is established between the early ego and its object with which to a certain extent it forms a continuum. Indeed, the ego never completely abandons this aim with which we are confronted daily in the many manifestations of projection. At times it seems to be the sole task of the ego to stamp reality with the impress of impulses arising from within.

Thus in the early contact with reality the infant endeavors to rediscover in every object a part of himself (2) (Ferenczi, Sandor — *The Analysis of Comparisons*, N.Y., Boni and Liveright 1927. *Further Contributions*, p.p. 397-407.) At this stage object cathexis and identification are hardly to be differentiated. Later when the synthesizing function of the ego is impaired object cathexis regresses to identification. Now the object comes into closer relationship with the ego, and since the ego is formed out of the perceptual elements relating to sensations arising both within and on the surface of the body, the object is now transformed and colored by early ego experiences; that is, it is transformed in accordance with the primary process which seeks to establish again a perceptual identity, so that in states of regression when it is projected it represents not only the original object but carries with it early ego feelings as well. In other words, the object is projected in terms of those feelings which can readily find expression when the libido has regressed to narcissism and the ego to a state of hallucinatory wish fulfillment (3) (Freud — *Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams*, Vol. IV, Coll. Papers, p. 138).

Just as the id cannot be studied directly but only through its derivatives the ego too yields more information about itself, its character, boundaries and functions when it is under duress. Under such conditions we often are given the opportunity to observe phenomena which we consider



typical of an earlier mode of mental functioning. The behavior of people whose system of thought is largely animistic provide excellent material for such observations.

In the stage of animism, because of the nebulous structure of the ego with its poorly defined boundaries, the ideational contents derived from instinctual sources readily pass beyond the frontier of the ego and secure a tangible and corporeal existence in material reality. The perception of natural phenomena is thus distorted into a representation of these subjective elements which should remain within the compass of the ego, and which in a higher stage of mental development are dealt with in a different manner, one of the earliest mechanism being that of repression. This stage in which man constantly maintains the delusion that the natural order of things is influenced by his inner experiences makes him into a diety. This expansiveness which permits of a "participation of the ego in objects" gradually undergoes a restriction until a point is reached where the reality testing function is sufficiently developed to furnish fairly reliable information as to what is, and what is not, part of the ego.

The question now arises as to what is the fate of this early relationship between ego and objects. What happens to this early picture of reality that mirrors early ego feelings and allows one to hold fast in his belief that every thought and act stands in a definite and casual relationship to the important happenings in the world about him? Whatever else may occur, of one thing we are certain, that it is never completely effaced but continues to exist behind a more accurate picture of reality, occasionally reminding us of its presence by giving rise to episodes that may vary in intensity from slight and transitory experiences of depersonalization and the uncanny, to extreme psychotic regression.

One aspect of reality to which man has preserved an important and lasting archaic relationship is the serpent. Folklore, myth and fable records man's unconscious pre-

occupation with this creature toward which his attitude has always been most contradictory, at one moment regarding it with feelings of awe and reverence, at another with hate and contempt as if the roots of their enmity were ineradicable. Why does this animal arouse such strong affects and lend itself so well to the representation of a part of our psychic that it seems to have secured a permanent place in the mental life of mankind? The answer to this question must lie in those special attributes of the serpent that are closely connected with early ego feelings and are thus capable of arousing affects that, long since, have become foreign to the mature ego.

The most outstanding characteristic of the serpent is that it has no appendages. Because of this its manner of locomotion is peculiar to it alone, and its method of inflicting harm is restricted either to biting or squeezing. Now during the early period of ego development there is a time when the infant is not yet aware of its arms and legs and its most important relationship to the outside world is based upon the activity of its gut. It is this organ, highly cathected in its entirety, which for a long time is the chief executive organ for the discharge of instinctual tensions. This is indeed a state of extreme narcissism and omnipotence when the infant as far as concerns its relationship to the world, is scarcely more than a gut with a mouth. It is in this primitive, oral phase of the individual's development where object cathexis and identification coincide to a great extent that the groundwork is laid for a relationship between man and serpent that is to be elaborated throughout all the successive stages in his psychic evolution.

In addition to being a projection of the body image at a time when it was essentially a gut with a mouth with destructive impulses, the very shape and movement of the serpent casts it into another role, that of the anally expelled object that has been incorporated. The ambivalence toward the serpent thus comes to reflect the intensely contradictory attitudes toward objects ingested or expelled.

This animal that kills either by biting or crushing, and in appearance is a tube, easily comes to represent early aggressive impulses which are expressed in the same manner, particularly on the late oral and anal stages. In fact it not only reflects these impulses arising in the gut but is in a sense the organ itself. It would seem that when the ego was in the process of separating the external world from itself this animal, above all others, was fitted to become the embodiment and external representative of the most basic instinctual impulses. So in the successive systems of thought that record man's effort to resolve instinctual conflict without the necessity of renouncing the belief in his own omnipotence the serpent was assigned a special role.

Since much of the early feeling of omnipotence is maintained by gratification of instinctual tensions arising in the gut, which is so highly cathected narcissistically, it will not be astonishing to see a projection of this early constellation when man endeavors to discover anew some evidence in the external world that will support him in his need to believe that this omnipotence is not entirely lost. And in all the attempts he makes in this direction the basic struggle between ingestion, retention and expulsion, which elevated to the mental sphere determines man's relationship to all objects, always occupies a prominent place in the many rituals and ceremonials which he imposes upon himself and by means of which the omnipotence is to be achieved. But, as has been indicated, in states where the libido has failed to develop beyond the stage of narcissism or has regressed to it, and the ego function is diminished, objects are often experienced in terms of part of the body image which may consist of an organ or its function, provided it is sufficiently cathected.

The universality of serpent worship and later its transformation into modern religions must have had to do with an attempt at restitution and deification of the introjected and destroyed object. This object now becomes identified with excrement (4) (Abraham, Karl — The Development

of the Libido, London, Hogarth, Selected Papers, p. 444). This unwelcome identification often disturbs certain persons who during their devotionals are visited by revolting thoughts concerning the excretory organs or activities of the holy figures or their having been smeared with excrement. When the Wolf Man saw three piles of horse dung in the road he was tormented by the obsession of having to think of the Holy Trinity. At a time when he was most devout he also was harrassed by blasphemous thoughts such as God-Swine or God-Shit. When he passed beggars, cripples or very old men he had to breath out noisily so as not to become like them. In this way he kept his aggression largely externalized. The process of deification, in his case had not succeeded in solving the problem of his ambivalence. Certain obsessive patients are driven by an impulse to eat excrement as an atonement for a great sin. This great sin we believe to have been one of father murder and perhaps even earlier matricide, and the mechanism of religion designed to establish peace once more. Although the original sin is committed periodically in the form of communion it is in no way now a courageous or revolutionary act designed to liberate one from authority since it already presupposes complete subjugation and willingness to adhere to, and be governed by, a list of restraining regulations that leave very little opportunity to reap a reward in the form of new and untrammelled instinctual freedom. One must now be satisfied with a state of grace, a feeling of bliss or ecstasy or the deep and radiant contentment of the unio mystica. How different this is from the savage who after periodically killing and eating the totem animal is at least granted a brief respite from the burden of his restraining taboos and is permitted a temporary interlude of uninhibited instinctual activity. This practice which permits of a more direct form of gratification has been preserved in the form of the holiday which originally was a day of religious feasting, a holy day. With the passage of time it has come to be associated not only with ritualistic

religious acts but also with other activities that on other days would have been condemned by society.

Even in Christian monotheism some of the most pious and sanctified acts have to do with eating the host. If the serpent represents these impulses arising in the gut then in serpent worship the projected impulse with all its ambivalence was worshiped, while in Christianity, wherein man sought to maintain his narcissism by creating a diety in his own image, the serpent was reduced to the role of a villian like Lucifer coming to represent only the hostile impulses. Man could thus repudiate this representative of his early impulses because in the communion he ate only the kind, loving host. He could now enjoy a relationship with his diety that was relatively free of ambivalence.

#### The Role of the Serpent—McGuire—Galley3

In the Garden of Eden story emphasis has been placed on the punishment of Adam and Eve but little notice is given to the punishment of the serpent; namely, to be deprived of its limbs and condemned to crawl on its belly in the dirt and be despised. And too, it must be remembered that the ambivalent attitude toward the serpent arose following a transgression of the prohibition against eating the apple. As in many cases, the allegorical and symbolic meaning of the story, especially on a phallic level, obscured its meaning in the more literal and pregenital sense, just as much genital activity is often a facade behind which pregenital impulses can be indulged.

The means by which the serpent was reduced to his lowly position in the Garden of Eden was through having its limbs removed since it must be assumed that to be condemned to crawl on its belly presupposes a different manner of locomotion. In this respect the serpent was castrated. It is at this point that it becomes the expelled object that has been incorporated and has now undergone a metamorphosis emerging with the shape and attributes of the gut, that is, as excrement.

The following is a dream from a female patient. "I

am in a room where a man is lying on the floor. His tongue is forked like a snake and he keeps licking it out. There was something wrong with his leg too. It just tapered off into a string-like thing. Then there are several men in the room. They all are bandaged around the lower abdomen and the bandages are soaked as if from suppurating wounds. Someone wants me to touch the bandages. It was a horrible dream." The abundant material during this period left no doubt that this composite dream figure, part man and serpent, was an anal creation.

The fate of the serpent in the Garden of Eden indicates the attitude that man adopts toward his early ambivalent object relationships. Although this helps him achieve some degree of civilization it in no way provides a safeguard against the return of the repressed.

There is one intense and characteristic belief in all forms of serpent worship which comes to expression in the narcissistic overvaluation of bodily functions and products. Just as the healing power of serpents is also found in an undisguised form in excrement, so also the wisdom of the serpent must be connected with that stage wherein one's thoughts are regarded as omnipotent. It is in this way that a great deal of man's narcissism is rediscovered in the external world.

In many people and perhaps to some extent in all mankind the serpent evokes a sensation of uncanniness. An uncanny feeling according to Freud is evoked when "some impression revives repressed infantile complexes and when the primitive beliefs we have surmounted seem once more to be confirmed" (5) (Freud — *The Uncanny*, Vol. IV, Coll. Papers, p. 399). The serpent does both for it is first associated with oral and anal sadistic impulses and secondly the evacuated and now hostile excrement is alive. It is as if for a brief moment early ego feelings full of animism and omnipotence were reactivated. It is probably this transitory feeling of omnipotence that evokes the feeling of the uncanny and which may merge into anxiety since



it opens the way for behavior that early in childhood would have led to a fear of castration or body destruction. This feeling of omnipotence often seen in early schizophrenics at times arouses the most intense anxiety, causing the patient to beg for external help in controlling this great power that has been thrust into his hands.

The perception of the serpent is often enough to arouse a strange and apprehensive feeling of estrangement and de-personalization that may develop into intense anxiety because it reactivates early impulses that for a moment threaten to invade the ego boundaries which hold in check these archaic feelings. The anxiety amounting almost to panic, experienced by many persons with strong oral impulses who cannot achieve orgasm for fear of losing control, disintegrating, etc. and paranoid patients whose repressed oral sadistic impulses are often clearly reflected in their facial expressions, furnish convincing evidence of the antithesis between adequate ego protection and a fear that the loss of that protection will end in annihilation.

So it is that the serpent often appears in those conditions where the individual has regressed to a stage where the immature ego is threatened by its own sadistic impulses and by the object toward whom these impulses are directed. Since this sadism is predominately oral and anal in nature the serpent represents not only one's orally destructive impulses, being as it is essentially a gut with a mouth, but also the anally expelled object that has been orally incorporated and from whom one has cause to fear retaliation. Thus one's own feces becomes an object of fear and through the mechanism indicated above enters into elaborate and multiple associations with other objects and persons by whom one may come to feel persecuted. Confronted with these sources of danger the regressed and feeble ego with inadequate defense mechanisms at its disposal can do nothing but react with the most intense anxiety. This means that the libido has been withdrawn from the genital with subsequent diffusion of instincts and a recathexis of the residue



of earlier ambivalent object relationships. Because of the slight differentiation between ego and object at this point the reinforcement of sadistic pregenital impulses threatens to destroy the self.

A schizophrenic patient experienced sensations which she described as the dismemberment of a serpent. Now since the serpent has no members this must refer to early ego feelings which were reactivated following the dissolution of her ego boundaries. These feelings must have existed prior to the discovery of her own members when the ego was scarcely more than a partial body image consisting of the gut and its function. In such states of regression the cathexis of the gut is intensified until it comes to represent the entire ego or what is left of it. In such a condition all intrapsychic object representations would be formed according to the model of this primitive ego so it is little wonder that in such a state the individual feels the external world to be full of danger. Whenever the serpent appears as a symbol either for the phallus, vagina, breast, feces or other parts of the body it probably reflects the pregenital sadistic retaliatory intent with which these objects are unconsciously perceived.

The following dream was preceded the day before by a dream of intense oral frustration and guilt. "A woman that I know has an oil well which is in the middle of the street. It is not a pumping well but like a basin or a little wall that one builds around a tree." This dream recalled early childhood experiences on a farm where he often visited. There was a pump house and engine that was dangerous because, he said, he could have got his hand mangled. Near the pump house was a thicket, dense with foliage which he never went into because there might be a snake in there. He said there was another spot overgrown with brush, a little lower than the rest and quite soft, and although he knew there was nothing there he avoided it anyway.

The anxiety aroused by the orally sadistic female gen-

ital portrayed in this dream has found expression in various primitive beliefs, two of the commonest being that of the vagina dentata and the poison maiden who has a serpent in her vagina that goes out periodically to kill men. In addition to the dangerous vagina this latter belief portrays the phallus, often the maternal phallus, with the same sadistic attributes.

Perhaps the most elementary aspect of the variations on this theme is expressed in the simple belief that if a serpent enters a house where there are several women among whom is a nursing mother it will attack her first.

In those anxiety dreams in which one experiences a sensation of suffocation or is about to be engulfed by a large mass such as a huge ball rolling toward one, the possibility of the retaliatory breast should be considered (6) (Isakower, Otto — A Contribution to the Patho-Psychology of Phenomena Associated with Falling Asleep, *Int. J. of Psy*, Vol. XIX, 1938.)

A patient suffering from a mild reactive depression had the following dream. "I hear a rustling sound which is being made by a snake slithering through the grass. This sound then merges with something that I cannot see but which I sense is coming toward me. I feel it suffocating me and am terrified. I awake struggling." In this case there was little doubt that the dangerous object was the breast made sadistic through the mechanisms operative in depressions.

Freud believed that there was an early, direct and immediate identification with the parents that precedes object cathexis and is reinforced by the latter. Again he writes, "when the super ego is set up there is no doubt that that function is endowed with that part of the child's aggressiveness against its parents for which it can find no discharge outwards on account of its love-fixation and external difficulties (7) (Freud — *New Introductory Lectures*, N.Y., Carlton House 1933, p. 150).

In various pathological states where the severity of

the super ego is represented by the serpent as a persecutor, the character of the child's relation to the world, not only on all levels of object relationship but also at a time probably preceding object cathexis can be seen for there is little doubt that this persecutor is the child's early intestinal aggression. It is the projected image of what Simmel once called "the animal within us." (8) (Simmel, Ernst — Repression, Regression and Organic Disease (read at the semi-annual meeting of California Analysts, San Francisco, 1940).

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## NIGHTMARES OF BEARS

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The variety of animals that people our dream life is greater than Noah ever knew. He only admitted real animals into the Ark. In our dreams fantastic animals that not even Walt Disney could conceive of are as likely to appear as the genuine species. Because we fear wild animals by archaic instinct, we create them from the stuff of our dreams whenever a threat to our safety rises from the depths of our unconscious mind. A hungry predatory beast is a highly dramatic representation of brute, destructive force.

The choice of the species is determined by many motives. It often falls on a bear on the war-path. Ferocious as it looks in most of dreams, the manner of death which it would inflict is seldom specified; the dreamer usually wakes up before the bear gets him.

This sudden waking is always the sign of unendurable tension. The bear is a real menace even though the menace is not described precisely. When the dreamer is asked what the bear would do to him, he is slightly bewildered. His first impulse is to say that the bear would eat him; then his knowledge of natural history emerges and he realizes that not being predatory animals, bears rarely feed on flesh. Immediately on this admission comes the thought: They are dangerous nevertheless, they have strong arms that crush the victims before their claws tear them to pieces. Indeed, "hugging like a bear" is an oft-used expression, more or less alluding to the destructive possibilities of embracing. However, nothing is illusory about the fear of bears in dreams; it is as real as if it concerned an actual encounter with an enraged bear, as if, at some time in the past, we had been devoured by a bear and dreaded the recurrence of that awful event.

Childhood memories play a great part in the genesis of such bear fantasies. We fear instinctively all big and powerful animals because they might devour us. Foolish

parental remarks lend color to the fear, and nursery rhymes may further support it. Through poetry, however, we may derive pleasure out of a situation that once overwhelmed us, because our rational mind reassures us that the thoughts by which we were unconsciously disturbed are preposterous. Laughing at our fears is a wonderful panacea against the morbid spells of fantasy life. Who is not delighted by A. A. Milne's lines in "When We Were Very Young":

"Whenever I walk in a London street,  
I'm ever so careful to watch my feet;  
And I keep on the squares,  
And the masses of bears  
Who wait at the corners all ready to eat  
The sillies who tread on the lines of the street  
Go back to their lairs  
And I say to them, 'Bears,  
Just look how I'm walking in all of the squares.'  
And the little bears growl to each other, 'He's mine,  
As soon as he's silly and steps on a line.'  
And some of the bigger bears try to pretend  
That they came round the corner to look for a friend;  
And they try to pretend that nobody cares  
Whether you walk on the lines or squares.  
But only the sillies believe their talk;  
It's ever so important how you walk.  
And it's ever so jolly to call out, 'Bears,  
Just watch me walking in all the squares!'"

Reassure the child that bears do not eat human beings, and he will feel safer, though he may still dread being crushed and clawed by them. To this fear Bible stories may lend a good deal of realism: The children who taunted Elisha and were destroyed by bears suffered a fate far too gruesome for it not to haunt our sleep in our tender years. Some family Bibles illustrate the story and any child who shivers on looking at the picture may begin to

dream of a pursuit by bears when, because of some real or imputed transgression, the fear of the strong parent rises in its mind. But for the Biblical story, another animal would be found to objectify the fear of being killed.

I vividly recall a story about a bear with which my father used to regale me. There was a woodsman with the fascinating name of Tchadeli Badeli who had as many children as the woman who lived in a shoe. When he left them alone in his hut, he always warned them not to open the door to any stranger. One day, a big bear lumbered along and knocked on the door. 'Who is that?' the children asked. Imitating the voice of their father, the bear said: 'I am Tchadeli Badeli.' The children were deceived, opened the door, and the big bear gulped them down one after another.

At this stage of the story, my father dramatically repeated the names of every member of my family (which happened to be an unusually large one), my own being left to the last as I was the youngest. Then he went on to describe how the bear, gorged with its meal, lay down near the fireplace and fell asleep. Soon Tchadeli Badeli came home, saw the sleeping bear, and instantly guessed what had happened. With his axe, he killed the bear, then split open its belly and took out the children one by one, calling out their names as they emerged. My own name came last, and none of us was the worse for the experience.

My father never tired of telling this story and I was always ready to listen. The happy note on which it ended, probably helped to allay my fear of bears, if I had any. Continental people, barring Germanic races, are not visited by bear fears to the same extent as are English speaking people. The reason is linguistic. In English, 'bear' is both a noun and a verb, and the verb means giving birth. This ambivalence originates in German roots: *Bär* and *gebären*; it permits the man who speaks English or German to use bear dreams to illustrate the trauma of birth more extensively than others would use them.

The following case so plainly shows the ambivalent use of the bear that the dreamer himself immediately recognized it:

"I was in a tunnel with pink walls. At the farther end was a bear; at the other, the open end, was a grille like the cover of a manhole which had to be lifted up to permit one to get out. The bear got out that way once, and I wondered at how clever it was to manage it. When it got out, it changed into a little dog. I passed the bear, but it was not dangerous. Then I passed out through the manhole. There was a rope there but I was told not to swing out too much as I would get off the track."

The dreamer explained that the rope suggested to him the umbilical cord, the manhole the vaginal door to life, the tunnel with pink walls the uterine canal, and the bear the fear of birth. He concluded that he himself was the bear—fear personified—when he was born, and that he had changed into a little dog—fear domesticated—now that he had attained analytic understanding. That is why the bear was no longer dangerous; birth was no longer a nightmare.

#### *The Mountain of Birth.*

The next case presents a bear nightmare with the original emotional content, not yet affected by analytic enlightenment:

"I am talking to a friend in a boastful way of former feats: 'Do you see that mountain there? We used to climb up to the top and hike around up there where the clouds are.' Then I am coasting downhill on a sleigh and have difficulties because the snow does not cover the road completely. There are stretches of road bare of snow. Suddenly a great, lumbering grizzly bear comes up from the left toward me. I am very frightened and as I feel I cannot pass it with the sleigh owing to poor snow conditions, I start over the slope to my left, willing to risk my limbs in a steep ride that may land me in a gully in order to get away from the bear; but I do not have enough time to move



in either direction, and it seems that I have climbed a tree."

Climbing to the top of a mountain and enjoying his stay high up in the clouds was a recurrent dream with this patient. He did not realize that the dream was a fantasy of returning into the uterus. The mountain top in a sea of clouds is an island; just like an island is a mountain submerged in the sea. The island is a universal symbol of the unborn child in the amniotic fluid. The fetus is a living island. The dreamer's boast of former feats (not based on actual experiences) is his way of basking in the glory of the past, in the memory of pre-natal bliss. The sleigh ride downhill is a dynamic representation of the journey down the uterine canal, the danger of the fall in birth being represented by the gully, its difficulties by the insufficient snow over the ground, and its terror by the bear. The snow, because of its coldness, is often used in dreams for discomfort and fear. Its insufficiency over part of the road is a cumulative emphasis on the danger of the descent.

The wording of the dream deserves special study. It is a verbatim copy of the patient's narrative. The expression "bare of snow" is immediately followed by the appearance of the grizzly bear. The unconscious mind is not concerned with spelling. It uses sound as an instrument of orchestration. We know that the animal is meant when we encounter the word "bear" as a noun. We know that birth or the ability of endurance is referred to when we come across the verb "to bear." Our orthographical training does not permit our conscious mind to confuse the word "bear" with "bare", meaning naked, or "to bare," meaning to expose. For the unconscious mind, however, sound is universal currency. Any doubt regarding it is disposed of by a study of wit and humor. An example that illustrates the present argument to perfection is this:

"What would you do if you met a ferocious bear in the woods and had no weapon in your hand?" The usual answer is: 'I would run.' Whereupon you ask indignantly: 'What, with a bare (bear) behind?' "

Whoever first thought of the joke had made the unconscious equation between bear and bare. If such equations are operative in the construction and wording of dreams—and I claim that the wording of the dream is part of the dream work—"bare of snow" means more than the bareness of the ground; it also bares the 'bear,' it exposes the fear of birth, just as the sleigh (which, for no particular reason, is later changed into a sledge) exposes the fear of death by its equation with slay.

The ending of the bear dream is highly symbolical. Finding no escape, the dreamer climbs a tree. From a real bear, a tree would afford no safety as bears climb trees, but from the fear of birth it does offer a sanctuary. The tree is a universal symbol of the Tree of Life and when it is climbed, we are born or have fled back into the womb. The ordeal of birth is over or has not yet begun. In either case we are safe from the bear.

Another instance of the way in which humor illustrates the processes of the unconscious mind came to my attention in the associations of a school teacher during the discussion of this simple dream:

"A school trip on boat to Bear Mountain. The pupils were well behaved, though I anticipated trouble. At one point in the dream, I visualized the students getting on one side of the boat and rocking it back and forth. Yet this could not have happened as my impression is very strong that they behaved well."

This patient used to conduct school trips to Bear Mountain every year. His students always behaved well, except once, after an anonymous letter had denounced two of the teachers to the principal as homosexuals. The names were not mentioned but he knew he was one of the men referred to, and he had a great deal of anxiety over the possibility of losing his job. Loss of job is equivalent to loss of living, life. It is a threat which may well stir up the memory of the first danger to life: that of being born.

The rocking of the boat is a fantasy; it did not happen

in the dream, he only visualized it, which makes it a kind of dream within the dream. In the waking state it associated with a story from India. On the Ganges, a boat was passing under a tree. An enormous snake dropped on the boat, which carried a number of children. The children fled in terror to the other side of the boat, which thereupon capsized, and a large number were drowned.

If Bear Mountain can be unconsciously accepted as the Mountain of Birth, the river excursion—with the Indian story at the back of the dreamer's mind—parallels the journey on the Boat of Life—a journey which often ends in the fear of drowning, a symptom of suffocation memories due to birth. The rocking of the boat may conceivably recall the rhythmic contractions of the maternal body in delivery, or it may reach back to the gentle undulation caused by mother's walking, the sensation of which survived in a remote recess of the dreamer's mind. The Holy River in India is less far away in space than this event in time, but the sun rises in the East, and poetic imagination has invested this direction of the compass with the symbolism of the dawn of life.

The interconnection of the bits and pieces of this jigsaw puzzle was indicated by this story which the patient spontaneously advanced:

A professor was asked in medical school if there was any evidence of a pre-natal influence by the mother's mind on the fetus. He answered: "There is but one authenticated instance. A pregnant woman was warned not to go to the Zoo. She did not heed the advice and lingered for a while before the bear cage. Sure enough her baby was born with bear (bare) feet.

#### *Baring the Bear.*

The dream of an 18-year-old ballet dancer clearly shows the evaluation of bear, the animal, with bare as a reference to the nakedness of the new-born child.

"I am trying to dive from a height into a pool to show

off before Romanoff, who is on the shore. I see a big bear swimming in the pool. Then the bear is chasing me. I can easily keep just ahead. Somebody else is running with me. We flee into a room and bolt the door."

She associated with bear: igloo, hive, honey. The igloo association suggests that the bear in the pool was a polar bear, which she did not mention explicitly in the narrative of the dream. The igloo is an Eskimo hut and the link between polar bears and Eskimos is obvious. The igloo, on the other hand, looks like a beehive, hence the next association. As the dreamer was of Hungarian parentage, I asked her if she knew the Hungarian word for bee. She did: "méh" (pronounced "mahe," with the "e" silent), and suddenly tumbled to the meaning of my question. "Méh", in Hungarian, also means womb, and the hive and the igloo, by their shape, are good pictorial representations of the same.

She still missed the meaning of the bear. She could only think of being bare in the pool: standing up to something or "to bare." It did not occur to her that the word also means giving birth, yet this is the sense in which the symbol is used in the dream. Diving into the pool is the reverse of being born, being spilled from the amniotic waters. There is death in the pool in the shape of the bear, and being chased by it reveals how the trauma of birth can haunt us with death fears throughout life.

Romanoff was her ballet master, but the name also describes the Czar of Russia. The big bear thus permits us to think of the Russian Bear, which is not represented by a polar bear, hence perhaps the reason for the omission of the word. Both Romanoff and the Czar are father symbols, and the suggestion is that her escape is also motivated by the fear of the father to whom, as indicated by the exhibitionistic diving and by the nakedness association with bear, she appears to be incestuously tied. She is thus fleeing from her own emotions, and the ease with which she keeps ahead of the bear permits the inference that the

trauma of birth bothers her less than the Oedipus situation, and that she is frightened of the latter mainly because it mobilizes the fear of birth. All sexual guilt tends to reactivate the trauma of birth with the result that the guilt assumes unreasoning proportions. Bolting the door does not lock it out. It indicates its very opposite: repression which, in the long run, is bound to result in neurotic manifestations.

*Babies and Bears.*

A combination of bear and stove symbolism is evidenced in the dream of a Western social worker:

"I seem to be out in the woods. My office assistant had a little cottage, and I had another one nearby, a few hundred yards away, quite surrounded by trees. I only came for the week-end, while she was out there with her husband for a longer period. I noticed she used my cottage because it had a better stove. I seemed to be quite anxious about her because she was pregnant and I saw some little black bears creeping out of the woods, which made it dangerous to stay there. At one time I waited for a man to come along and give me courage to go back to my own cottage."

The patient's office assistant was pregnant in fact. She herself always had a feeling of indelicacy about pregnancy. She became conscious of it at the age of eight, when her mother was about to have another child; she felt that something was being done that was not proper.

"I never forget the sense of disapproval which I used to feel on seeing a pregnant woman."

This disapproval sprang from early sex taboos, which the patient had now outgrown. Her analysis put the finishing touches on a long process of maturity. Two cottages, well apart, show it in the dream. As a house or cottage is the usual symbol for the personality and as she only comes to the place for the week-end, it seems as if she were drawing a line between her old self (which was stationary in the woods, a symbol of the unconscious mind) and the

new self which is on the move. The assistant is a good symbol for the lesser self, hence her pregnancy appears to represent the patient's old sexual outlook on life. She seems to be moving from infantile concepts to a maturer sexuality, represented by the man who will take her to her own cottage.

The bears were baby bears. Their plurality suggests bearing babies, and danger is necessarily associated with birth. Her cottage has a better stove, because the inner flame has been purified through analysis. The new personality gives more warmth, it makes the cottage more pleasant. The use of her better stove by the assistant is a means of identification. The stove is a symbol of the womb and the flame within also stands for the flame of life: pregnancy. The assistant's pregnancy, therefore, is her own. She is visualizing herself as capable of bearing a child, as having attained full femininity.

This, indeed, proved to be the case. The analysis ended by a break in the patient's masculine attitude to life. She became engaged to get married.

#### *Hugging the Bear.*

The hugging bear as a symbol of destructive love appears in the dream of a male patient who never knew intimacy with women and was strongly addicted to homosexual practices from which he hoped to be able to break away through psychoanalytic help.

"I was in a room and saw a couple of monkeys. One was larger than the other and I was a little bit afraid of it. It came to sniff me. Somebody else called them and they crawled all over this person's shoulder. Then, before I knew what I was doing, I was playing with one that changed into a big black bear. It was hugging me. I remembered how, in early childhood, I read of bears hugging people to death. How strange that I should be playing with a wild animal, bigger than myself! I was trying to see if I could hug hard and I was testing myself on a sophomore. There

was a peculiar way of doing it. He had his back to me and I put my penis from behind into the crotch of his legs. This was the right position, whether my erect penis was supposed to support him or me. However, I had no erection, but I did the hugging. It did not seem to me I was doing well, but I was told I had done a pretty good job."

The last statement of the dream was an answer to the patient's principal preoccupation: was he making good progress in combating his homosexual desires. He was. The dream showed his inability to function in the homosexual position. By associating it with bears that hug people to death, he conceded the destructive character of homosexual emotions and, at the same time, pointed to birth as the source.

In view of the fact that in his childhood he suffered from nightmares in which bears were chasing him, it is significant that he is no longer frightened of the bear, in fact plays with it. The play is plainly of sexual character, and the growth from small beginnings into something frightful is well indicated by the change in the genus of the monkey. In the animal kingdom, the bigger and the smaller often represent the male and the female. The patient thought that the two monkeys were paired. It was the bigger one that sniffed him. Such sniffing might represent cognition through sexual smells. Playing with the male monkey thus alludes to the origin of homosexual practices. Being able to hug hard but without getting an erection with a man, seems to indicate that the patient's virility is not wanting, only the outlet which it had found in the past was wrong.

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The dream of the dancer, through associations with Russia, reveals the bear as a parental symbol, and thus ties up with generation of life without recourse to linguistic equations. The choice of the bear by primitive peoples as a totem animal points in the same direction. Moreover,



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emerging in Spring from the cave where it hibernates, the bear easily might parallel the birth of the child into the Spring of Life. Mythological grounds also argue for this unconscious appreciation. Primitive peoples believed that the revolving seasons were controlled by the constellation of the Great Bear (Ursa Major, the Dipper). This constellation was considered a magic generator, the source of all energy which permeated the world. Small wonder then that we so readily exploit linguistic combinations for the expression of racial emotions that must have been ancient when the pyramids were built.

